

SERMONS TO
BOYS AND GIRLS



JOHN EAMES, M.A.



Pract. Theol.

Class 5. 2. 2

Book 7. 5

University of Chicago Library

GIVEN BY

Besides the main topic this book also treats of

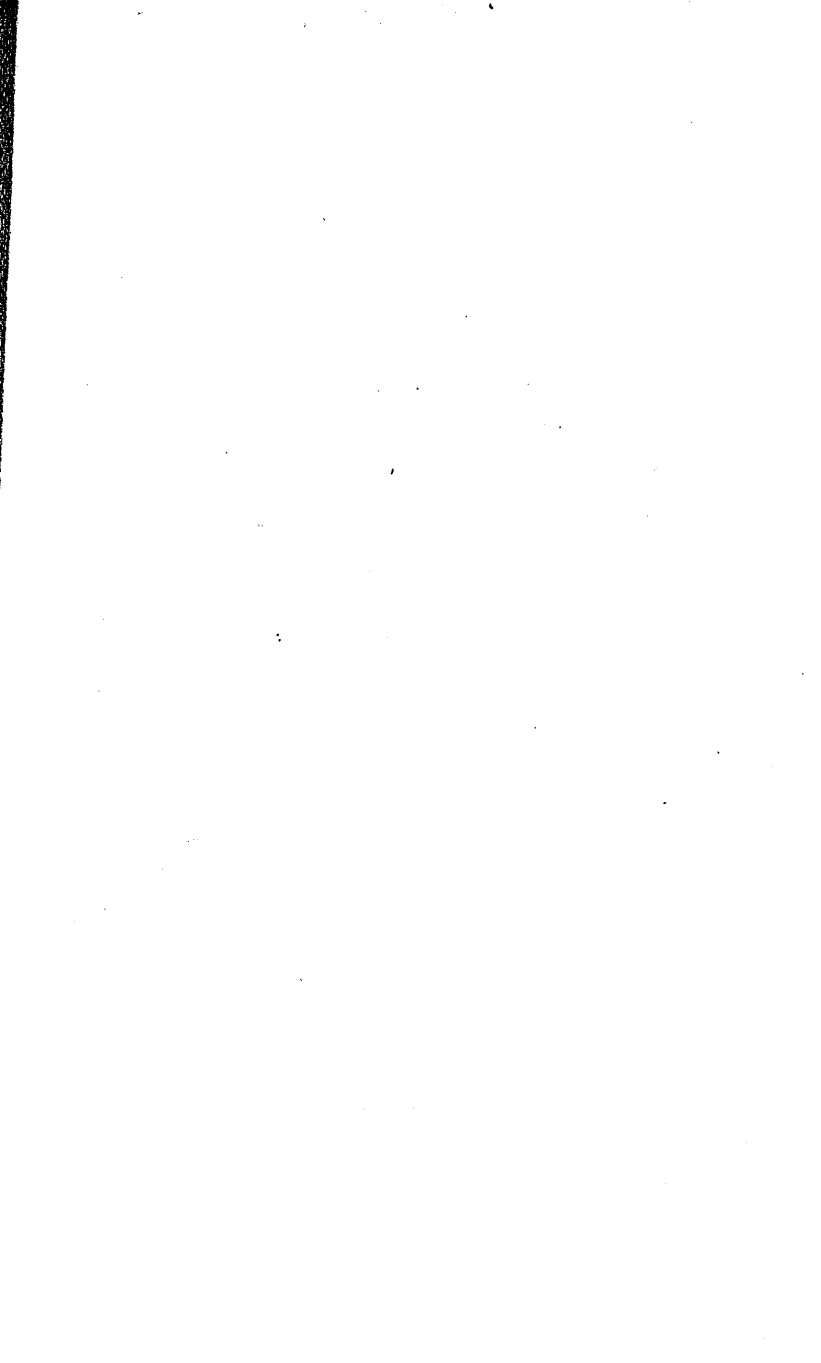
Subject No.

On page

Subject No.

On page

--	--	--	--



SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

**BOOKS OF
CHILDREN'S ADDRESSES**

**FIFTY-TWO ADDRESSES TO
YOUNG FOLK**

By Rev. J. Learmount 3/6

**GREAT MOTTOES WITH
GREAT LESSONS**

By Rev. G. Currie Martin,
M.A., B.D. 3/6

**TIN TACKS FOR TINY
FOLK OUTLINE ADDRESSES**

By Rev. C. Edwards 2/6

TALKS TO YOUNG FOLK

By Rev. G. Howard James 2/6

**TALKS TO CHILDREN ON
BUNYAN'S HOLY WAR**

By Rev. Charles Brown 1/6 net

THE GOOD FATHER

By Rev. B. J. Snell, M.A., B.Sc. 2/6

WORDS TO CHILDREN

By Rev. B. J. Snell, M.A., B.Sc. 2/6

MEASURING SUNSHINE

By Rev. Frank Smith,
M.A., B.Sc. 1/6 net

London: H. R. Allenson.

THE BOYS' LIBRARY
**SERMONS TO BOYS
AND GIRLS**

With Index of Illustrations
and Anecdotes

By
THE REV. JOHN EAMES M.A.

SECOND EDITION

LONDON
H. R. ALLENSON
1 & 2 IVY LANE, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C

1904

347
70
YRABU! 00A01HO

HASKELL

BV4315

E2

BUTLER & TANNER,
THE SELWOOD PRINTING WORKS,
FROME, AND LONDON.

316542

TO
ARNOLD AND MURIEL



Contents

CHAPTER	PAGE
I THE STORY OF A RUNAWAY SLAVE	9
"Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?"—PHILEMON xvi.	
II A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD	21
"A little child shall lead them."—ISAIAH xi. 6.	
III THE BOY JESUS	32
"As they were returning, the boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem."—ST. LUKE ii. 43 (R.V).	
IV UNDER AUTHORITY	41
"For I am a man under authority."—ST. MATTHEW viii. 9.	
V APPOINTED UNTO A KINGDOM	50
"I appoint unto you a kingdom."—ST. LUKE xxii. 29.	
VI COVETOUSNESS	62
"And Jesus said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness."—ST. LUKE xii. 15.	
VII THE GREATEST VICTOR AND THE GREATEST CONQUEST	72
"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."—PROVERBS xvi. 32.	

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
VIII SILENT VOICES	82
"The heavens declare the glory of God . . . there is no speech nor language, their voice cannot be heard."—PSALM xix. 1, 3 (R.V.).	
IX THE CHILDREN'S FUTURE	91
"And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof."—ZECHARIAH viii. 5.	
X THE HISTORY OF A LIE	100
"And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy firstborn."—GENESIS xxvii. 19.	
XI GOD HEARD THE VOICE OF THE LAD	110
"And God heard the voice of the lad."—GENESIS xxi. 17.	
XII ABOVE SUSPICION	118
"Abstain from all appearance of evil."—I THESSALONIANS v. 22.	
XIII FAITHFULNESS	128
"And Ittai answered the king, and said, As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be."—2 SAMUEL xv. 21.	
XIV FOR THE SAKE OF MY BROTHERS AND MY PLAYMATES	138
"For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee."—PSALM cxxii. 8.	
XV THE NARROW WAY	147
"Narrow is the way which leadeth unto life."—ST. MATTHEW vii. 14.	
INDEX OF ANECDOTES, ILLUSTRATIONS	157

I

The Story of a Runaway Slave

“Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord?”—

PHILEMON xvi.

THE title of my address sounds a modern one. It is not a great many years since the slaves were liberated, and before their freedom was given to them there were many exciting stories of slaves who escaped from their masters and found freedom on British soil. Therefore, doubtless, as soon as you heard that I was to tell you the story of a Runaway Slave, you supposed it was such a story as I have referred to. But while it is quite as interesting, or even more so, yet it is not one of those stories, for it is as old as the time of the Apostle Paul, and it is told us in an exquisite little letter

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

which he wrote to one whose name was Philemon.

We usually call it the Epistle to Philemon ; but we will use the simpler word Letter, because we understand it better.

This letter which tells us the story of the runaway slave was written by St. Paul in quite a private way and for a private purpose, just as you in these days might write such a letter to a gentleman in whom you were interested. All the other Epistles written by St. Paul, such as the Romans, or the Corinthians, or the Ephesians, are about great and important Christian truths or doctrines, and we have to follow him very attentively to be able to understand all his reasoning about these important spiritual matters. But when we turn to this Epistle or Letter to Philemon, it is about nothing more than a runaway slave ; and because it does not contain anything about those great spiritual principles of which all the other Epistles are full, the people who lived some three or four hundred years after St. Paul said that it could not possibly have been written by the great Apostle himself, because, said they, St. Paul was much too great a man to concern him-

STORY OF A RUNAWAY SLAVE

self about so trivial a matter as a runaway slave. It seems that we might just as well say that the incident of Jesus taking the children in His arms cannot be true, because Jesus was far too great to concern Himself about the children. We, in these days, however, see the greatness of the character of Jesus in the fact that He did concern Himself about the children, and so in St. Paul's letter about this runaway slave we see proofs of the Apostle's greatness, and of the fact that he had caught much of the spirit of Jesus.

But before we begin to consider the story itself, let us notice what a remarkable thing it was that the great Apostle Paul, who was so full of the care of the Churches, could find time to write a letter of this kind. Churches were asking his advice on important matters; long letters had to be written to other Christian communities giving further instruction in Christian truth; in some Churches divisions had to be healed and misunderstandings put right; yet with so much to do he finds time to write to Philemon at Colossæ about his runaway slave. Most men would have said, I am far too busy to do that; I have to be think-

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

ing of Churches which number many people ; I cannot spare any of my time for matters that concern one man only, and that man a slave. That St. Paul did find time is surely a sign of his goodness and his greatness.

Let me tell you now something about the slaves in those days. The conditions under which we live are so different that we can hardly form any idea of the state in which those slaves existed. So many slaves were there, that in one province, it is said, there were three slaves to one free man. Some masters owned ten or even twenty thousand slaves ; and there is in existence now the will of one of the masters of those times in which between four and five thousand slaves are willed away. These slaves had no rights ; they were simply, as it was termed in those times, live implements. If a slave stole from his master, or ran away, he could be scourged or crucified as the master pleased. About the time when St. Paul was writing of this runaway slave, a Roman senator had been slain by one of his slaves in a fit of anger, and the law demanded that all the slaves under the same roof at the time should be

STORY OF A RUNAWAY SLAVE

put to death, the innocent with the guilty. There were as many as four hundred. You say, Surely these were not all put to death for the offence of one man? They were, and when some of the more humane people rose against such cruelty, the Roman Senate sent an army of soldiers to put them down, because, as one of the senators said, "The slaves must be held down by fear"; and another said, "As though Heaven cared for slaves."

We can better understand now the position of the slave in whom St. Paul was interested, and we can see, too, how much St. Paul was doing in interceding for one of this despised class.

We are also now prepared to follow the rather remarkable story through. Very far away from Rome, from which city St. Paul was writing, there was a town called Colossæ. It was in Asia Minor, and not far from Ephesus. In this Colossæ there was living a rich man named Philemon. Some five or six years before the time of which we are speaking, St. Paul had stayed at Ephesus when on his third missionary journey.

Whether or not Philemon came over from

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

Colossæ to hear St. Paul, or whether the Apostle went from Ephesus to Colossæ to preach, we don't know ; this only is certain, that Philemon heard St. Paul and became a Christian, and not only so, but opened his own house for Christian assemblies, and at last had the joy of seeing a Church formed in his house, and so ably did he work in connexion with it that St. Paul calls him his fellow-labourer.

This Philemon had a slave, whose name was Onesimus. We know that the Jews possessed slaves in the early years of their history, and we have seen that it was so with the rich men among the Greeks and the Romans. It may be that we wonder that a man, after he became a Christian, though a Greek or a Roman, should still keep slaves ; but it took a great many centuries for Christian people to learn that it is not right for one man to own another ; it was not till the last century that the slaves on British soil were liberated ; and one part of the interest of this letter of St. Paul's about the runaway slave is the influence it has had in helping men to see the right in this matter of slave-holding.

STORY OF A RUNAWAY SLAVE

Now this Onesimus, who was Philemon's slave, one day stole something from his master and ran away. That he was very determined about what he did we can tell by the great distance he travelled. He resolved not to stay in hiding in that neighbourhood, but to make his way to the world's great centre, the wonderful city of Rome, which was the London of those ancient times. There he could mix with the crowds of men and not be known ; there he could gain a living for himself, and be free from the fear of discovery. If he had gone as straight as the crow flies in his journey from Colossæ to Rome, it would have been a distance of nine hundred miles ; but the road he travelled must have been longer. Possibly he crossed two seas and walked right through Greece before getting to that great city. Where he hid himself by day until he got free of those districts in which he was known ; how he managed to get food ; whether he worked his way as a sailor when he crossed the sea, is all unknown to us ; we can only imagine the anxiety and the difficulty, and, perhaps, sometimes the hunger, with which he pursued his way. At last he got to Rome, and doubtless felt all the weight

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

of his fear lifted from off him as he mingled with the throngs of the people of the city.

Now comes a very remarkable thing. Paul the Apostle is in Rome, preaching the Gospel. Onesimus hears that the Apostle is here, or, it may be, comes across him with a crowd about him, even though at that time the Apostle was a prisoner, for he was still permitted to reside in his own hired house. Perhaps, if St. Paul did visit Colossæ when he was at Ephesus, Onesimus saw and heard him, and it may be with a desire to get a glimpse of him again, and to hear once more something of the new strange Gospel he was preaching, he stands and listens in the crowd. But whatever it was that brought him under the influence of the Apostle, the fact remains that just as the truth of the Gospel made its way to the heart of his master Philemon, so that truth makes its way to the heart of the slave Onesimus; it may be that he was pricked in conscience at the remembrance of his theft, or, perhaps, he had had so hard a time in getting to Rome that he was worn out with his journey, and, wretched in heart and mind, longed

STORY OF A RUNAWAY SLAVE

after the peace, the joy, and the salvation through Jesus Christ.

We can imagine the struggle which went on in his mind and heart. Should he tell the Apostle all about himself? Could he trust the Apostle with his secret? What would he advise him to do? One thing he dare not do, and that was to go back to a master who might scourge him or even crucify him, and how was he to be sure that he would not do so?

Nevertheless, to the Apostle he went. How tenderly St. Paul received him, and how interestedly he entered into his life, this beautiful letter to Philemon tells us. In it he speaks of Onesimus as his own son; he pleads with Philemon, that for the sake of the love Philemon bears him, he should receive back into his service, with a ready forgiveness, the slave who had wronged him; he tells how he would have liked to keep Onesimus as his own companion, except that it was not right that he should do so; he even offers from out of his own scanty means, if need be, to make up what Philemon lost by the theft; and above all, the letter contains those significant words which we used as a text, in which he tells Phile-

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

mon how that while Onesimus was a slave when he ran away, yet now he comes back to him through the Gospel not a slave, but a brother : “ Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord ? ”

Bearing this letter, Onesimus makes his way back over those hundreds of miles from Rome to Colossæ. How his heart would beat the nearer he got to the city ! how he would wonder whether the letter would have the desired effect upon his master ! And then as he came through streets well known to him, and saw again faces so familiar, the news would hasten on before him, The slave Onesimus has returned ! and all would wonder what this quiet but strange return of his own will could mean. At last, like the Prodigal, with broken words upon his lips, he would give the letter of Paul the aged to his master. And the wonder of it all, almost beyond belief, and the joy of it all, to so good a Christian as we can believe Philemon was, would prompt a welcome so ready and forgiving, that, had the Apostle himself been present, he would have been more

STORY OF A RUNAWAY SLAVE

than satisfied. The runaway slave returned a brother in the Lord.

We have in this story an illustration of the power of the Gospel of Jesus. It could even bring a runaway slave to the feet of the Saviour, to find in Him a liberty which was greater than his own freedom as a slave. It could touch the heart of the master, so that he could forget that the man was a slave, and that, being a Christian, whether or not he was what men called a slave, yet he was a brother. This power of the Gospel is a very real thing when it can do so much for men.

Then, also, we are taught by this story that, as St. Paul says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." It has taken men a long time to learn this fully. We have found it hard to believe that all are equal in the sight of God, and that while men make distinctions among themselves, God makes no distinctions, except in those instances in which we differ in goodness, service, or love. But the great lesson that every man is our brother in Christ was taught very powerfully and very beautifully

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

in this brief letter or Epistle, even though, as some once said, it was only about a Run-away Slave.

II

“A Little Child shall Lead”

“A little child shall lead them.”

—ISAIAH xi. 6.

NEARLY always when the child or childhood is spoken of in the Scriptures they are referred to in order to make some beautiful picture yet more beautiful, or to give additional emphasis to what has been said. A reference to the child nature is introduced because it is felt that there is something so very beautiful in the child that nothing else can exactly convey the same meaning.

For example, in the chapter where these words occur we have a very beautiful picture of a regenerated world, or of Paradise if we so like to interpret it. Every evil quality shall be taken away from men, and the

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

ravenous nature from animals. There shall no longer be any reason to fear the lion, or the leopard, or the wolf. All things shall be changed; and so completely shall they be changed that the unusual sight shall be seen of a little child leading and caressing those once ravenous beasts. And such an uncommon thought presented in such an uncommon picture lends emphasis to what the prophet is teaching.

And in the same way, when Jesus wished to make one of His truths very emphatic and clear, we read that He called a little child unto Him. He wanted those round about Him clearly to understand what the true spirit of the disciple is, that spirit which alone would open heaven's gate to them, and so He set a little child in their midst. Nothing else could illustrate so clearly and forcibly His meaning. Those big, and as yet untrained, fishermen were to become little children. Not in stature, but in trustfulness, simplicity, and eagerness. Even Jesus could not tell us in a more forcible way how much He thought of childhood than He told us when He set that little child in their midst.

When Solomon was speaking to the Lord

" A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD "

in a vision, in order to emphasize the weakness he felt apart from the gift of wisdom God could give him, he said : " I am but a little child." And as we read the words, we feel that it was a very powerful way of putting it.

Also when Naaman had been cleansed from his leprosy in the river Jordan, in order that the completeness of that cleansing might be shown, we read : " His flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child."

All these references to the child help to make the incidents to which they refer the more vivid, and in each instance they give great emphasis to what has been said.

We must be quite sure, then, that there is something very beautiful and very touching, as well as very instructive, about a good child's life if Isaiah, and Solomon, and Jesus all found in it something to illustrate great truths by. Even a child's beautiful and happy life, where it is, of course, what it ought to be, will be helpful and instructive to men and women.

Our text, as I have said, is a reference to that coming time when every evil, fierce, and angry characteristic shall be taken away both from men and animals, and only gentle-

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

ness and love shall reign—when the power of Christ shall be felt by all men, and when the world shall be what God intended it to be and what Jesus died to make it. And that happy time is set forth in the delightful and uncommon picture of the lion and the wolf losing their fierce nature, and a little child leading them.

I wish to tell you how, even to-day, this prophecy is being fulfilled; and how that constantly it is being fulfilled through Jesus Christ. You ask me: Do you really mean that a child shall lead these fierce animals in these days? No, I do not mean that, but I mean what, after all, is more than that. That would be only something to wonder at, and nothing more; but I mean something very practical and still more beautiful. There are other things beside lions and leopards that are wild and fierce—even men and women. And at times we come across such men and women who have been influenced by a little child's beautiful and gentle spirit, and that young spirit has worked its way into the hearts of those men and women as nothing else could do, and has had a transforming power over their lives, making them beautiful and gentle

“ A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD ”

also. At such times the prophecy has most surely been fulfilled, and a little child has led them.

I knew a man and woman once who had a little child given them. They had not loved God, nor had they served Him ; but when the child came they loved it with a very great love, and they watched it as it grew up year after year, and their whole affection seemed centred on it, but still they did not think of the kind, loving God and Father who loved them in the same way. And presently God called their child to Himself, and their hearts were broken, and they spoke of their child as lost. But after a while they began to think of the words of Jesus which they had heard at the grave : “ I am the resurrection and the life,” and soon they found themselves clinging to those words, for they seemed to give them back their child again. Gradually they came to think of their child not as lost, but as in the Home of God. So a longing grew up in their hearts to some day join it, and they began to look forward to meeting it again, and in the end they entered upon the Christian life, that when they died they might be united to it once more. The beautiful

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

spirit of that little one had touched and opened their hearts and minds to the influence of the Gospel of Jesus. A little child had led them.

And there is another very beautiful story about a child leading a crowd of excited men and women. It comes down through fifteen hundred years, and is a story from Church history. There are some sad and disappointing things in Church history, but there are also some very pleasing incidents recorded. In the year 374 the Bishop of Milan died. Milan was a very important city, and the office of bishop was a very influential one. There was consequently great excitement among the people as to who should be the new bishop. Some wanted one, some another. The day came for the election of the bishop, and the church was crowded. The great mass of people could scarcely be restrained in their excitement. The governor of the province rose, and did his best to calm them. In the momentary silence which followed after he had done speaking, to the surprise of all the voice of a little child was heard to ring through the church, and the words came clearly to every ear: "Ambrose, bishop!

“ A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD ”

Ambrose, bishop ! ” The people accepted it as an intimation from God. They were led by this little child, and they made Ambrose bishop, and he became the great bishop and leader of his times, whom we know in Church history by that name. A little child had led them.

Nor is the story of the Hungarian Queen Theresa less interesting. It seemed that her own infant son was likely to be deprived of his succession to the throne. The poor Queen-mother, feeling for her baby son, and yet knowing her own weakness, appealed to her nobles, and came before them with her little child in her arms, and the sight of the tender, helpless babe so touched them that they determined to do their best for its rights, and they banded themselves together in its behalf. Thus, even in the case of those stern men of war, a little child led them.

But this prophecy has its highest and best fulfilment in our Lord Jesus Christ. We have often read of the babe Jesus who was born on that first Christmas morning. Just as the Magi, the wise men from the East, bowed to the babe in the manger, and as the shepherds left their flocks and

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

came to adore, so, through the centuries which have flown by since then, many fierce men and wild have come to bow to that same child Jesus. The same child Jesus has led them. I might tell you many stories from heathen lands about fierce, savage men, such as Africaner, whose very names have been dreaded, but who have been led by the child Jesus and have lost all their fierceness and have become through Him gentle and loving.

Even fierce men see beauty and meaning in a child, and will be gentle to it when they will not be gentle to others, and they know that there is something in the child they have not got. Robert Louis Stevenson, who lived in the island of Samoa in the South Seas for some years, tells us in his *Letters* of a very pretty sight he once witnessed in the island. He says—

“There was on Saturday a great public presentation of food to the king and Parliament men. The different villagers came in in bands—led by the maid of the village followed by the young warriors. It was a very fine sight, for some three thousand people are said to have assembled. The men wore magnificent head-dresses, and

" A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD "

were oiled and glistening in the sunlight. One band had no maid, but was led by a tiny child of about five—a serious little creature, clad in a ribbon of grass and a fine head-dress, who skipped with elaborate leaps in front of the warriors like a little kid leading a band of lions."

Why this little child should have led in these fierce men of war Stevenson does not tell us. The tiny child and the warrior were such a contrast. Perhaps it was the contrast which was intended. Or had these Samoan chiefs, we wonder, set this little child to lead so that, when they came into the presence of their king, the very fact of the little child leading showed that they had come in the peaceful, happy spirit of the child, and not in the fierce spirit of war? If so, then, all unknown to them, they had in some measure grasped what Christ sought to teach His disciples when He set a little child in their midst.

It does not seem to us quite in keeping with the nature of things that a little child should lead. A child is so deficient in strength and understanding, and yet we have seen that a child often does lead. It is a proof, therefore, to us that the child is

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

endowed by God with other gifts which sometimes prove to be even more powerful than bodily strength or wisdom. It is quite true that little children can sometimes lead grown-up men and women. God has given even to children the power to influence. Even they may become His messengers and ministers. God has spoken to some people by prophets, to others He speaks by sickness or loss, and there are yet others to whom He speaks by children. Children can sometimes touch the hearts of men and women when no one else can. God has given to children great winsomeness. They nearly always draw out our love. They, weak in some things as they are, may nevertheless do great things for God. But only bright, happy, loving children, children who, like the child Christ, grow in favour with God and man, can do all this and be all this. And where there are such, their influence is always felt. If you could look into the homes where such children are and read the hearts that are there, you would soon see how the gentle influences of the child life have worked themselves into the hearts of those who are older. Men and women who have long since left their own childhood

" A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD "

behind, are gentler and brighter because of the children who are there. They have been led into paths of kindness and thoughtfulness and tenderness, and when we ask who has led them, the only answer that can be given is this: " A little child has led them."

Jesus & his father & ~~his~~
mother. Sunday 179
note book.
T. M. K.

III

The Boy Jesus

"As they were returning, the boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem."

—ST. LUKE ii. 43 (R.V.).

"THE boy Jesus." How very familiar this sounds! The word boy has a charm about it of its own. In the Authorized Version the translation is: "The child Jesus"; but it is very different to read "the boy Jesus." We are all so familiar with the phrase "the boys"—the boys at their cricket or at their football. When we speak of the boys or our boys there is usually a frank and kindly tone given to the words. If a mother tells me that her boys have gone down to the river or to the cricket field, there always seems something particularly affectionate about the way she uses those words—the boys.

That, then, is why these words, "the boy

THE BOY JESUS

Jesus," please me. Jesus was once one of the boys. He went out to the fields with the boys, or down to the brook with the boys. They called to Him as you call to your companion ; He called to them as they call to you. They ran to show their latest discovery to the boy Jesus—it might be some big fish in the river, or some new bird in the trees. When they went out they called for "the boy Jesus," because they loved Him; and when they came back and were saying good-bye at His door they would talk of where they would go next time. All the boys in the village knew about the boy Jesus, and if other boys from the neighbouring village came, who should happen to say that the boy Jesus was not quite like other boys, then those who were companions of the boy Jesus would answer : " No, He is not quite like other boys, for He is gentler and kinder and more thoughtful, and it's a pity the other boys are not more like Him."

It is a very beautiful term, "the boy Jesus." The boys and the girls can claim Jesus as well as the men and the women, for was He not once one of the boys ? Men and women love to claim Him as one of themselves, and feel that everything attaching

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

to manhood and womanhood is hallowed, because Christ was once a man. In the same way may not you boys and girls feel that everything attaching to boyhood and girlhood is hallowed because Jesus was once a boy ?

There are some things about boyhood and girlhood which I should like to say, and they are suggested by the phrase "the boy Jesus." In the first place, boyhood has been sanctified because Christ was once a boy. When we say that boyhood has been sanctified, we mean that it has been hallowed, or in other words, that boyhood has been made sacred or holy by Christ's being once a boy. We ought to reverence our boyhood more because Jesus was once a boy. If that same state in which you find yourself to-day was the state in which Jesus Christ once was, if it was not too humble for Him, if He, the Son of God, was not ashamed to be a boy, but was willing to take a boy's place and to do a boy's work, then that fact ought to make you think a great deal more of your boyhood than perhaps you do.

Let us look at it in this way : often those of us who are grown up think to ourselves, as we walk through the Cambridge streets,

THE BOY JESUS

or pass in through the College gateways, Lord Bacon and Sir Isaac Newton, Milton and Oliver Cromwell, Tennyson and Lord Macaulay, all walked in and out of those gateways and through these streets, and the thought is very pleasing to us, and you too will understand why it is pleasing when you have grown older, and have come to know something about these men.

But that is just what I wish you to feel about your boyhood and Jesus Christ. I want you to feel that boyhood is a more holy and more beautiful thing, because Jesus was once a boy. For if you feel this, I am sure you will find yourself saying : " The sort of boy that I can believe Jesus was, I will try to be." And, boys and girls, He who was once the boy Jesus will help you to be such as He was.

Let us also remember, concerning boyhood and girlhood, that they come only once in a lifetime. I can imagine you answering, " Well, that is simple enough, for we all know that." True ! we know a great many things that our lives would seem to say that we did not know at all. We know some things of which we take no notice. Many men know that they should not steal, and that

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

they should not bear false witness, but they do both these things, and they do them very deliberately—they carefully plan their stealing, and they hide the falsity of their witness under lies.

Although boyhood and girlhood come only once in a lifetime, yet some boys and some girls have never realized it ; and more, they never value their boyhood and their girlhood while it is theirs ; they would leave it behind at once if they could ; they are impatient in it, and would rush forward to manhood and womanhood. Oh, boys and girls, there are some things that can only be got, and other things that can only be enjoyed, in boyhood and girlhood.

If God had thought that boyhood and girlhood were unnecessary, He would have made us grown men and women at once. Some of the animals are grown up in a very short time ; some of them can take care of themselves within a few days of their birth. But God has said it shall not be so when men and women are born into the world. They, said He, shall have a glorious time of boyhood and girlhood first, and shall know the love and care of parents, and shall go out into life as men and women only after years of fond-

THE BOY JESUS

ness and tenderness and training in the home.

We have, therefore, to learn also about boyhood and girlhood that they are a time of preparation. Do you know what the foundation of manhood is? It is boyhood. Do you know what the foundation of womanhood is? It is girlhood. We should not care to live in a building that hadn't good foundations. If, then, boyhood is the foundation of manhood, how necessary it is that it should be a good boyhood!

Boyhood and girlhood are the time for preparation. The boy Jesus found it so. Don't you remember how, when they went back to Jerusalem for Him, they found Him in the Temple asking questions of the doctors?

Robert Robinson, who a hundred years ago was a prominent minister in this town of Cambridge, was told by a gipsy, before he had become a Christian man, that he would live to see his great-grandchildren? And he began to picture himself, though he was but a youth, as a very old man, with these young children round about him, and, forgetting himself, he had sympathy with them, and thought how trying and disagreeable it

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

would be for such light hearts to have so old a man among them. So he determined to hear everything, see everything, and learn everything he could, and by this means so store his mind with useful facts and interesting stories that he might be, even in his old age, pleasant company for children so young. For this reason he went to hear Whitfield, the great preacher, and was converted. But the important thing is this—he clearly saw that his youth was a time of preparation for manhood.

Perhaps you would answer, We are preparing for manhood ; one is learning his avoirdupois, and will be able to weigh up goods when he gets behind the counter ; and another is learning his bookkeeping, and so on. Yes ; but preparation means so much more than that—it means also the cultivation of the mind, that we may understand the truth as it is taught us in the Scriptures ; and the training of the heart, that we may come to love the Lord Jesus with a deep and holy love ; and the development of the spirit, that we may be able to enter into communion with our Creator, and so become, like Abraham, the friend of God.

Not the least important thing about boy-

THE BOY JESUS

hood and girlhood is that they should be a time of pure joy. Wherever there are boys and girls, there ought always to be downright real joy. There is not always joy among boys and girls, for one hears sometimes the angry word and sees the blow, and so on, in the streets; but, nevertheless, one of the chief characteristics of this early period of life is joy. It was meant to be happy, laughing boyhood.

One of the prophets of ancient Israel was once speaking about the Jerusalem that was to be; his heart was aglow, and he was picturing the beauty and the joy of the future, and he used one beautiful illustration of the gladness there would be in the city, and this was his illustration: "The streets of the city," said he, "shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof." Nothing seemed to him to set forth more aptly true joy in a city than the real happiness of the laughing, playing boys and girls.

The boyhood of the boy Jesus, we are sure, was one of holy joy; no sin nor disobedience marked it; no waywardness ever had to be repented of. His boyhood is summed up in St. Luke's beautiful words concerning Him, that He "increased in wis-

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

dom and stature, and in favour with God and man." We need ever to remember that only He who lived the perfect boyhood can make our boyhood what it ought to be.

IV

“ Under Authority ”

“ For I am a man under authority.”

—MATTHEW viii. 9.

THAT is just the way in which we should expect to hear a Roman soldier speak. There is a sort of martial tone about the words even when we ourselves utter them. You can usually tell a man who has been a soldier ; he has ways of his own that point him out at once. Sometimes you can notice that his speech is slightly different ; his words are uttered in short sharp sentences, as though he had not quite got out of the way of calling men to order on the parade ground. Sometimes you can see that he has been a soldier by his walk ; he neither takes as long steps as he can nor as short as he can ; the soldier has learned by long years of experience that we do not walk at our easiest, and certainly not in our most elegant way, when we go

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

striding down the streets with steps that are too long for us.

Now this Roman soldier clearly shows his soldierly training in his speech to Jesus. He has come anxious that Jesus should heal His servant. He will not trouble Jesus to go to his house. He knows the power there is in a command, and so he says : " Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." He well understands the magic there is in a word when it is uttered by some people. Often, it may be, he had heard a Roman general speak merely a word, and as a result had seen legions of Roman soldiers march into battle and to death. Says he : " I know what authority is, O Lord, for I am a man under authority ; I am commanded by those who are above me, and I command those who are below me ; and I say to one Come, and he cometh, and to another Go, and he goeth, and if, Lord, I am obeyed when I speak my word of command, how much more shalt Thou be when Thou speakest Thy word ! "

And we know how greatly this Roman soldier's faith pleased the Lord Jesus, and how, as the reward of that faith, he returned to his house to find his servant healed.

" UNDER AUTHORITY "

There is something for us to consider in this Roman soldier's words : " A man under authority." If we were going to be soldiers, the very first thing which would be necessary would be to make us feel that we were men under authority. Now if we are going to be Christian soldiers, also the very first thing necessary is to make us feel that we are men under authority. No man can be a soldier who will do as he likes, and no man can be a Christian soldier who will do as he likes. Imagine an army where the soldiers keep running out of the ranks to talk to other people, or to do just whatever may happen to strike them at the moment. What could a general do if when he said " March ! " some of the soldiers were to sit down and say, " We will presently " ? That sort of thing would not do at all. There would be no discipline, no order ; no battle could ever be won, no enemy could ever be defeated.

The first thing necessary is to make the soldier feel that he is a man under authority. If a command is given, he must obey. If he is ordered to march into the thickest of the fight, he must not refuse, though he knows he will never come back again.

I say—in the same way—if we are going

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

to be true Christians, the first necessary thing is that we should recognize that we are men under authority. That is partly why the disciples of Jesus in this and all ages have been likened to soldiers. St. Paul speaks of us as soldiers, and as armed with shield and breastplate and helmet, and he speaks, too, of Jesus as our great Captain. What a number of our hymns, too, speak of us as being soldiers ! And surely if we are soldiers, we must be, like this Roman soldier, under authority. We have to be obedient to our commander, as he was to his. Like soldiers we have to be trained and disciplined, if we are to be conquerors in the battle of the Lord. Otherwise we have no right to liken ourselves to soldiers.

There was once in India, at the time of the Indian Mutiny, a celebrated soldier who was also a celebrated Christian,—I mean Sir Henry Havelock. So good a soldier was he that it used to be said : “Havelock is always ready.” If anything needed to be done quickly or promptly, or if anything difficult had to be undertaken, Havelock was the one to be called out. So exact was he in his duties that it is said he never had to meet an accusation, nor ever had to answer

“ UNDER AUTHORITY ”

a complaint. And I was struck with these words from his biography: “ Whatever he did he did with his might; ” and the biographer adds: “ He was a pattern not to military men only, but to all other men. ” Just as active and successful as he was as a soldier, so he was as a Christian man. He could lead his men to battle, or he could join them in prayer. He was a man under authority in the two senses—as a soldier and as a Christian. He knew that he could not be a good soldier or a good Christian otherwise.

I wish you to see how necessary this discipline is, for just as the weakness of an army is not always the smallness of its numbers, but often in the poorness of its discipline, so is it with Christian men and women. Most of us dislike discipline, or, in other words, most of us dislike being under authority. We like to order rather than obey. Very few who become soldiers care at first for the hard training which must be undergone in order to make good soldiers of them. A recruit is in training for a long time before he is really fit for the stern duties of war, yet otherwise he would be a failure. It is often the case with Christian people:

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

in the moment of enthusiasm they are willing to be soldiers of the Cross, but they are not willing to undergo the discipline which will make them not only soldiers, but good soldiers of the Cross.

We are all so like the French King, Louis XIV, who lived more than two centuries ago. When he was a boy, this boy-king had in his copybook this sentence for a copy : "Kings may do as they please." And that was what he always liked to do. And that is the sort of copy I suppose you would all like to have ; and no doubt you would all like to be kings and do as you please. But that was the very weakness of that king's character. He did not realize that there was any necessity to curb himself ; in fact, he had never been taught to. There was no discipline in his life, no spirit of obedience, and because there was none of these things, he became a wreck as a man and a Christian, and his wilfulness was largely responsible for the sad doings of the French Revolution of over a century since.

It is the same lack of discipline which is ruining a great many people to-day. Many armies have failed because their discipline was weak. They were more in numbers

" UNDER AUTHORITY "

than those they were fighting against, but there was no order or obedience, and their numbers even could not make up for the lack of discipline. The Emperor Napoleon had in his battles a reserve regiment known as the Old Guards. These Guards had been with him in all his battles ; they were used to the hardships of war ; they were noted for their discipline and for their obedience to the Emperor, in whose ability they had so much confidence. And these Guards, when they were sent into the battle, nearly always turned it in the favour of Napoleon. Even though the enemy were more in number, they could not stand against those disciplined troops.

Many men and women, boys and girls, fail to-day because they don't know how to be under authority. They are ruined because they will do as they please. They have not disciplined themselves. They have undergone no training. And so in every life, just as in every army, where there is no discipline and no training, there must be weakness and disaster.

We who are going to serve Christ must realize that we are " men under authority." We are under authority to Jesus, the great

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

Captain of our Salvation. We are to receive His words just as the soldier receives his general's words. We are not to dispute them. We are not to put off doing His commands till it suits our convenience, but we are to be, like Havelock, "Always ready." If there is to be a difficult thing done for Christ, we are to be those who are ready to do it.

And there is another way in which I wish you to feel that you are under authority. Feel that you are under authority to the Truth, to Love, to Gentleness, to Purity. For these are all, as it were, the commands of Christ. We are to obey all these in everything they say. If Love says one thing and Hate says another, answer that you are under authority to Love, and that you must obey. So also if Falsehood would prompt you to do one thing and Truth another, feel that you are under authority to Truth. Do what truthfulness says without questioning.

In this way you will be a good soldier of Jesus Christ. You will be growing up under discipline and obedience. This will be for your highest good, for the disciplined heart is always the happiest ; and a life obedient

" UNDER AUTHORITY "

to Jesus Christ is always the most truly successful.

And then just as Jesus looked on this Roman soldier with pleasure, so will He look on you. He will see you disciplining yourself, or, as St. Paul puts it, "enduring hardness as a good soldier." He will mark how you control and suppress yourself for His sake, for He is sure to notice whenever you put aside your own will for His will. And as He looks upon you the great Captain will be pleased with His good soldier, for He will see that you also are "a man under authority."

V

Appointed unto a Kingdom

“I appoint unto you a kingdom.”
—LUKE xxii. 29.

VERY strange words surely for the text of a children's sermon. Kings and kingdoms have nothing whatever to do with children. Children move in simpler spheres, and if they have duties at all, their duties lie far from crowns and sceptres. Yes, but might we not have said the very same thing when Christ addressed these words to His disciples? They were simple fisherfolk for the most part, and, like John the Baptist, were not such as we find in kings' houses. They were known by their Galilean speech, which would soon be detected in aristocratic Jerusalem, because to polite ears it would be a harsh rough dialect. Surely no people, not even children, could have seemed to be farther removed from kings and kingdoms than these men.

APPOINTED UNTO A KINGDOM

But what did our Saviour mean? Well, He meant that just as the Roman emperor ruled over all the habitable world, including Palestine, and just as he gave to Herod the Great, or Herod Antipas, or Archelaus, a portion of that large empire, such as Judæa or Galilee, to be king over, so Christ Himself was the monarch of a spiritual kingdom, and in that kingdom these Apostles were to have prominent places—districts, as it were—over which they should be kings. And how truly this has been fulfilled! Do we not look up to Peter and to John and to Matthew as kings? Not kings in the sense of living in palaces and wearing crowns and ruling amidst all the pomp of a royal court, but as great men, noble men, ruling men, precisely as the word king first meant; for long before people attached the ideas of pomp and ceremony to the word, the word “king” meant “the able man,” the man who could do great and wise things that others could not. And that is just what those honoured disciples became in Christ’s spiritual kingdom—the kingdom we know as the Church.

But these words also suggest the very matter about which I wish to speak to you. I cannot help feeling that they have a double

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

meaning, as so many things in the Scriptures have. These disciples had been quarrelling as to which of them should be accounted greatest. Sad and unworthy of them as it was, they were showing signs of envy, of jealousy, and of self-importance. Strange men these to be made kings ; yet it is to these Christ says, " I appoint unto you a kingdom," What if Christ had in mind the very thing I want to tell you now ? Perhaps He had more in mind at the time than the work they were to do for Him in the world ; it may be that, trying to check their envy and jealousy, He had in mind the kingdom which was in themselves, and which they had first to learn to rule before they could be a power among men in the world. What if Christ, therefore, meant these words to say : " The kingdom I appoint unto you is yourself : first learn to rule yourselves, for the man who rules himself is like a king ruling over a kingdom ; such a man keeps in subjection all envy, jealousy, and pride, just as a king keeps in subjection every element which would tend to disturb or to destroy his kingdom.

Let me tell you a story that sets forth my meaning. Hassan Ben Omar threw himself prostrate upon the ground outside the walls

APPOINTED UNTO A KINGDOM

of Bassora, and tore his hair with rage. In three years of extravagance and luxury he had wasted all the wealth which his father, the good Omar, had left him. His house, his vineyards, his oliveyards were all gone ; and now he would be compelled to seek employment as a camel-driver, or perhaps would even have to beg. He was angry with his unhappy fate. For a long time he lay moaning and weeping ; at length a voice sounded in his ears : " Listen, Hassan Ben Omar ! Allah intends thee good." Hassan raised his head, and his eyes rested on a venerable dervish who was calmly looking upon him.

" Begone, old man ! " he cried, " unless thou canst work a miracle to cure my grief."

" Listen ! " replied the dervish, " the prophet has sent me to serve thee. What wouldest thou have ? "

" Give me my possessions again," he cried, " my vineyards, my fields, my gold."

" And what would it avail thee," said the old man, " if I were to do this ? When they were thine, thou hadst not the wisdom to keep them ; in three years thou wouldest be as wretched as now. But hearken, Hassan Ben Omar ! Reform thy life, govern thy passions, moderate thy desires, hate the wine

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

cup, labour for thy bread, eat only when thou art hungry, and sleep only when thou art weary! Do these things for one year, and thou shalt be the monarch of a mighty kingdom."

Mist darkened the eyes of Hassan, and when it had cleared away, behold, the dervish was nowhere to be seen. Hassan invoked the aid of Allah, and rose from the ground with a light heart. He joined a caravan which set out for the desert the next day. He began to rise early and to labour with diligence, keeping in mind the kingdom that was to be his in a year's time. A drop of water and a few dates formed his simple meal, and at night he lay down by the side of his camels, and enjoyed sweeter sleep than he had ever known before.

If his anger was excited, or if he was tempted to any passion, the form of the dervish seemed to rise before him with a mild rebuke upon his lips, and his heart was calmed. Thus for a whole year he lived a frugal and patient life, following to the letter the words of the dervish.

At the end of the time he was again at the same place before the walls of Bassora, and was there very expectantly. He prostrated

APPOINTED UNTO A KINGDOM

himself upon the earth and cried out : “ Now, O prophet, fulfil thy promise.”

Suddenly he heard the same voice as before : “ Hassan Ben Omar, thou hast done well, and thy reward is with thee. Behold, thy kingdom is thyself. I have taught thee to rule it. Be wise and happy.”

Hassan looked in vain for the speaker ; no one was near. He pondered deeply upon these things, and began to see how true the prophet's words were, and so he resolved to continue as he had begun.

Thus he lived for many years, gradually becoming more prosperous, but firmly keeping to his frugal and industrious habits, until he became richer than the good Omar his father, and was called Hassan the Wise.

Christ says, “ I appoint unto you a kingdom,” and truly every one of us may take this as meaning the kingdom of his own self. Self is a kingdom over which we have sway ; we are to be the king of it. It will be a happy and prosperous kingdom in proportion as we rule it wisely and well. If we do not rule in our kingdom of self, and rule with a firm hand, there will be within us, as there have been in other kingdoms, dissensions and revolutions. If we have not the wisdom to

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

rule wisely, then every form of wickedness will spring up within us to dispute our rule, and we can rule wisely only in the same way as Hassan Ben Omar learned to do.

Remember that no king can rule his kingdom if there is no discipline or order within it. He is then king only in name. His commands are not heeded ; his position is not a safe one. There must be discipline and there must be order in every well-constituted kingdom. Some monarchs have been beheaded, some have been banished, and others have died of a broken heart because there was no law and order in their kingdom. They were only king in name.

Just so it is with this kingdom of self to which God has appointed us. If disorderly passion and anger, avarice and envy, are allowed to do as they like in our hearts, we shall be king only in name. Or even worse—like those kings who were beheaded or who died of sorrow—we shall end our lives in disappointment and regret, or it may even be in something worse.

If we are not careful, there will very soon arise within our kingdom powers that are stronger than ourselves. You know what I refer to : our evil habits will be more powerful

APPOINTED UNTO A KINGDOM

than we are, or our envy will weaken us, or our base ambitions will dethrone us, and we shall find, if we have no wise discipline over self, or if we have no law and order such as the Gospel of Jesus can bring into our lives, that we cannot hope to rule our kingdom as we should.

Remember this also: if a king is to rule wisely he must have wise counsellors. Many a king has come to a sad end, and his kingdom has been mismanaged, because he has listened to evil counsellors.

There is a very prominent instance of this in the First Book of the Kings. It was when the people of Israel went to Rehoboam the king, just at the time he had come to the throne, and asked him to lighten their burdens. He told them to come again in three days, and he would answer them. Then he consulted the old men, the wise counsellors of Solomon his father, and they advised him to speak good words, fatherly words, to the people, and to try to make their burdens lighter. Then he went to the younger men, and they said: "Don't do any such thing, but put greater burdens on them, that you may keep them down," and he hearkened to these evil counsellors. And what was the

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

result? Why, Jeroboam came up from Egypt and took the people's part, and ten of the twelve tribes were taken from Rehoboam and his sons for ever.

So is it with us in the kingdom which God has appointed to us. Wise counsellors are necessary if we are to rule well. What wiser counsellors can we have than those who have walked in the fear of the Lord—our teachers, our ministers, and all who love and serve Him? Yet wiser still than they are is One who is the best Counsellor of all; that Counsellor is He who is spoken of as the Wisdom of God; it is the Lord Jesus Christ. All who have ruled according to the wisdom He has given them have been true kings in their kingdom of self. He is a counsellor whose advice we can always follow. In those moments when we mistrust ourselves we can have full confidence in Him. When our friends know not how to advise us, we shall always find that He can direct us. He rules well who has Jesus Christ to help him to rule.

The great Emperor Napoleon, who saw so much of kings and kingdoms, knew the need of good counsellors if a king was to rule wisely and well, for when he was in exile upon the

APPOINTED UNTO A KINGDOM

island of St. Helena, in speaking of the Emperor of Austria to his physician, he said : "The Emperor of Austria is a good and religious man, but a foolish one. A man who, though he does not want common sense, never does anything of himself, but is always led by some one else. And as long as he has bad ministers [or counsellors], his government will be bad." Therefore we cannot be too particular in choosing for our counsellors only those who are themselves wise and godly men.

Remember this also, that the man who makes the best king is the man who is himself right at heart. It was better to live in the kingdom of Israel under Solomon, to whom God had given a wise and perfect heart, than under Ahab, whose heart was wicked and sinful in the extreme. In the time of Solomon there was peace and prosperity, and the people had opportunity and leisure to put up that beautiful temple to God. But in the time of Ahab there was war, and drought, and famine, and idolatry.

We most certainly cannot rule our kingdom of self well except we are right at heart. "Out of the heart the mouth speaketh," and "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." He stands firmest who, as St. Paul says, "stand-

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

eth steadfast in his heart." We can only be certain of the man whose heart is right. So if we are to rule well, we must rule our kingdom from out of a right heart. But to make the heart right is beyond the power of man; nevertheless, He who made us can take away our stony heart, and give us a heart of flesh. He can make the heart right.

I have but one other word to say, and it is this: We must remember that He who appointed to us a kingdom will one day come again to see how we have ruled that kingdom, and happy will he be who shall be found to have ruled his kingdom well.

" A little kingdom I possess,
Where thoughts and feelings dwell;
And very hard I find the task
Of governing it well;

" For passion tempts and troubles me,
A wayward will misleads;
And selfishness its shadow casts
On all my will and deeds.

" How can I learn to rule myself?
To be the child I should—
Honest and brave; nor ever tire
Of trying to be good?

" Dear Father, help me with the love
That casteth out all fear!
Teach me to lean on Thee and feel
That Thou art very near.

APPOINTED UNTO A KINGDOM

"I do not ask for any crown
But that which all may win ;
Nor try to conquer any world
Except the one within.

"Be Thou my Guide until I find,
Led by a tender hand,
Thy happy kingdom in *myself*,
And dare to take command."

VI

Covetousness

“ And Jesus said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness.”

—LUKE xii. 15.

How often our Lord Jesus Christ had to say to His disciples, “ Take heed ! ” or “ Beware ! ” Many people fall into sin not because they intend to sin, but because they are not watchful enough, nor quick-sighted, nor diligent. He who intends to be a Christian and to follow closely after Jesus Christ will need to have sharp eyes as well as a right heart.

But our Saviour uses the double caution here. It is not only “ Beware of covetousness,” but it is “ Take heed and beware.” The double caution is given as though we were intended to understand by it that it needed an especially quick eyesight to discover this treacherous sin. If we are to judge covetousness by the Saviour’s double words

COVETOUSNESS

of warning, we must suppose that He means us to be especially cautious about this sin.

There are some sins which lie in wait for us as some animals lie in wait for their prey : they are hidden in thickets or concealed in trees ; they make no noise, they cause not so much as a leaf to stir ; then suddenly, and without the least warning, they spring upon their unsuspecting prey. Such an animal, as we can well understand, is more to be feared than one that keeps always in the open. So is it with some sins.

There are also some sins that only mark men and women, and there are other sins that only mark boys and girls, but covetousness is a sin that all may fall into. One of the ten commandments particularly says that we are not to covet. We are not to set our hearts hungering after what other people may have. It is wicked in the sight of God, for a covetous heart can never truly serve Him ; it is hurtful to ourselves, for he who is covetous can never be truly happy. The man or woman, boy or girl, who is covetous, is to be pitied.

I was reading recently in one of Tolstoi's works a very powerful story which sets forth the disastrous effects of covetousness. I will give it to you in my own words.

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

There was once a Russian peasant whose name was Pakhom. The Russian peasants are very poor, and so was he. But he longed to become the owner of a piece of land : a neighbour of his had acquired a piece, and why should not he ? Some time after a lady who owned much of the land of the village was going to sell a part of it. Pakhom went to her, and persuaded her to let him have a piece. He got together half the money, and bound himself to pay the remainder within two years. He thought himself the happiest of men when he took possession of those fifty acres of land. He worked hard, and was successful, and soon paid off the money that was owing ; but he was not happy, he was continually saying how much more he could do if only his land were as large again. One day a peasant was chatting with him who had come from the Volga ; and this peasant asked Pakhom if he knew that some new districts had been opened up there, and that a man could get as much land as he liked at a very cheap rate. Immediately he began to covet. His possessions, if they were sold, would bring in enough to make him the owner of far more land than he now had. So against his wife's will and his friends' advice he did

COVETOUSNESS

sell up, and broke up his home and moved to the Volga. It was exactly as the peasant had told him.

What happiness now! A hundred and thirty-five acres of land all his own! Prosperity followed him, and he added to his land and his cattle; but the more he had, the more he wanted.

One night a traveller from the district of the Bashkirs called to ask where he could find a lodging. Pakhom, hearing where he was from, asked him in. They soon began to talk of land, of which Pakhom was more covetous than ever. He told the traveller how he had got his own land, but the traveller said that was nothing compared with the districts from which he had come, for there a man could get as much land as he pleased for a thousand roubles. The traveller went his way on the next day, but Pakhom did not forget his words. The district of the Bashkirs was three hundred and thirty miles away, yet he determined to see for himself if it was as the traveller had said. He started on his journey, and on the seventh day reached the place. He saw the head men of the district, and it was true—for a thousand roubles he could have as much land as he pleased.

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

He went to see the chief to settle the matter, and the chief told him that their method was this : he was to have as much land as he could walk round and mark out in a day—from sunrise to sunset—but he must be back at the point from which he started before the sun went below the horizon, or he would forfeit his thousand roubles. He went early to bed, that he might be ready for the next day, but he could not sleep : every now and again he thought he heard a horrid laugh outside the tent in which he was—it seemed to be the laugh of the chief of the district ; but when he went out there was nobody there. He was stirring as soon as it was light. Just before the sun rose, out came the chief and the head men. Pakhom paid his thousand roubles, and seized the spade with which he was to dig a hole at every few hundred yards, and into which he was to put a little turf as a mark.

The sun rose, and he started with the spade over his shoulder. Behind him he heard the same laugh as in the night, and in which it seemed that all joined. He looked back, but they did not seem to be laughing. What a chance was before him ! Never had man walked round so much as he would in that

COVETOUSNESS

day. He walked and he dug. The sun grew hot, and he threw away his coat ; the spade seemed to get heavier, but he went on. He would make a square of it ; so now it was time to make his first turn. Time went on, and he turned again. The point from which he started was hardly to be seen ; the sun was declining, and he must soon be turning for the third time. He was growing weary, yet he must hasten. The sun was going down quicker than he went. He began to be anxious. The sun was getting near the horizon. He could see the chief and the head men watching from the mound where he had started. They were motioning him to hurry. Was there such need ? He dug and hastened, and hastened and dug. The perspiration was streaming down him. He heard their shouts. Should he lose it after all ? His heart began to beat fast ; he felt a great pain in his side. There was yet a hundred yards or more to go, and the sun was just going below : he must make one last effort. But oh ! his heart ! They shouted ; he rushed towards the mound. But just as he got to it he dropped his spade, and putting both hands to his heart, he fell back dead.

They took the spade, and with laughter dug

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

just six feet of earth, and laid his body in it. It was all he got for his thousand roubles and his day's walking. His covetousness had got him only a grave.

You see the meaning of the story. Let covetousness get hold of you, and you can never satisfy it. You think you will be happy if you get what, for the moment, you want, but covetousness is not so easily satisfied ; it soon fixes its eyes on something else, and the same feverish time of longing commences over again. You long to own some land, if only a little, and at last you get fifty acres ; but when you have fifty you want a hundred, and when you have a hundred you find you could do so much more with two hundred. And so the mad longing to possess land goes on till if you had half a continent you would not be satisfied.

If covetousness seizes you, though you think you would be happy if your desire were granted, it banishes all happiness from you. The man who covets wealth may get wealth, but he never gets happiness out of his wealth ; he is sparing and saving, and locks it up out of sight, and he might as well be without it for the good it does him. Or if he does not lock it up he speculates with it, that it may

COVETOUSNESS

bring in more wealth, for he is not content with what he has ; and the moment he begins to speculate he is always anxiously looking into stocks and shares for fear any of those he possesses should go down in value, or lest he should miss a new chance of making more. His covetous spirit prevents him from being happy.

Covetousness often leads also to many other sins. It is one of the scouts of a whole army of sins. Less prominent and more subtle in its working than many other forms of evil, it finds an entrance where other sins would be immediately shut out ; but when once it has gained an entrance to the heart, it keeps the door open for the others as they come. Who can forget Achan and Gehazi in the Old Testament, or Judas in the New ? Especially sad is the history of the last two. Their privileges were so many, and their opportunities were so great. Who is to say that Gehazi, who was doubtless one of the young men from the schools of the prophets, might not have followed in the office and work of Elisha as Elisha did of Elijah, if only he had been worthy of it ? But his covetousness in fixing his heart on the gold, the silver, and the raiment of Naaman made him tell a lie and act

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

a deceit ; and it brought upon him that terrible plague of leprosy, which is sometimes spoken of as a living death. And did not Judas, in coveting the thirty pieces of silver, act a like deceit, and bring on himself an end yet more terrible ? We have not far to look, either in Scripture or in history, or in the lives of those round about us, before we find illustrations of the sad and terrible effects of covetousness.

There was good reason, therefore, for Christ to utter these words : “ Take heed, and beware of covetousness ” ; and there is good reason for us to heed them, for if covetousness found its way into the heart of one who had belonged to the schools of the prophets, and if it found its way into the heart of another who was one of the twelve, and left in both cases the most terrible consequences, how can we be sure that it will not find its way into our hearts ? We cannot be sure, except we are constantly guarded by the grace which the Lord Jesus Christ is ever willing to give to any who seek after it. This is a sin of which we are especially to take heed and beware, otherwise we shall be entrapped before we know it. Our happiness will never be in those things we covet, though they were all granted to us,

COVETOUSNESS

but it will be in a contented and satisfied heart, and that we get only through Jesus Christ; therefore "Take heed, and beware of covetousness."

VII

The Greatest Victor and the Greatest Conquest

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty;
and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

—PROVERBS xvi. 32.

How many times this Book of Proverbs speaks of being slow to wrath, or of controlling our anger! No other book in the Scriptures speaks so often or so directly of self-control. Some nine or ten times the writer directly alludes to it. For instance, in the fourteenth chapter he says: "He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly." In the same chapter he says: "He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding, but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly." Also in the twenty-ninth chapter he says: "An angry man stirreth up strife." And to these references many others might be

THE GREATEST VICTOR

added. He is ever advising us to control ourselves.

And here, in the verse we have taken as our text, he has said what is probably the greatest thing of all about self-control : "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty ; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." It is as though he said : "You have read about the mighty, and you have heard of the taking of cities ; you know about all the strategy and the art and the carefulness that had to be put into the work ; you know how brave the men had to be who took those cities, and above all you understand how carefully the leader or general had to go about his work. You have heard about all this, and you know what a great thing it is to take a city ; yet," says he, "the man who controls his anger and rules his spirit is mightier."

I wonder, now, why this writer of the Book of Proverbs so often spoke about ruling the spirit, or, as we may term it, self-control, or self-conquest ? Was it, do you think, that he personally found it harder to conquer himself than to take a city ? Perhaps he had done both, and knew ; it may be that he is speaking from out of his

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

own heart and experience. Or perhaps he saw so many people round about him who could not control themselves, who made their own lives miserable and were the cause of strife among others, that he thought he could not do better than be often teaching this lesson.

Why, too, does he connect "ruling the spirit" with "taking a city"? What made him think of these two things together? He might have said, "He that ruleth his spirit is better than the man who is clever," or "than the man who builds a town," or "than the man who makes a great discovery." Taking a city is such a strange comparison.

It is just this: he wishes to talk about self-conquest — that is, about conquering self. In every chapter of his writings he is saying, now in this way, now in that, Conquer yourself. There are a good many things in life to conquer, but to conquer themselves is usually the last thing people think of. When we speak of conquering, what usually comes to mind? "Oh!" you answer, "we usually associate conquering with generals and armies, with wars and the taking of cities." Yes, of course

THE GREATEST VICTOR

you do, and so does everybody else. So did everybody in the day when the author of the Book of Proverbs wrote. Thus, whenever he began to talk about conquest, away flew the thoughts of his hearers, or his readers, to fighting and to the taking of cities. So in our text he is calling to men, and saying, "There is another kind of fighting and of conquest—it is conquering self, for he that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city."

We have now to look at these words, and to try to discover, if we can, what the writer had in mind when he wrote them. We must notice first of all that he reminds us that we often fly to wrong conclusions. Had we been asked which was the better or more difficult thing to do—to take a city or to control ourself—we should have answered without hesitation, To take a city. It seems to us to take a city would be the better thing to do, because it would bring us more renown if it would cause men to talk about us. It would also be the more difficult thing to do, because it would require a great deal of thought in planning how to scale its walls or force its gates, and would require also a large army of bold

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

men to carry out our commands if we were generals. To control one's self seems such a simple, trivial, and uneventful thing compared with taking a city. To take a city would be to be making history, as we say, and our deed would be recorded in all historical books ; but whoever would know about our controlling ourselves ? Yet a part of the boldness and of the originality of this writer of the Proverbs is in the fact that he quietly but persistently goes against our conclusion, and says that we are quite wrong, for " He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty ; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

He maintains that it is the sign of more good in a man, and of more power, to be able to control himself. This, therefore, becomes very interesting, and we must apply what he says to life, to see if he is right. Suppose we had got a great general before us who had just taken a city that was very difficult to capture, and suppose we wanted to know whether he was a really strong and good man, how should we have to judge him ? What question should we have to put to him ? Should we have to ask him : " Did you really take that city ? "

THE GREATEST VICTOR

And if he could answer "Yes!" would that be a proof of his own personal worth and strength? Because a man can take a city, is he therefore necessarily a good and strong man? Or would your question have to be "Have you conquered yourself?" Which of these two questions would more certainly show us his true strength? Surely the writer of the Proverbs is right when he says that if you would really know whether he is a strong man or not, you would have to ask not about his conquering the city, but about his conquering himself, because "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

Strangely enough, this is all illustrated in history. You have read of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. He was a greater soldier than some of us think, and he was a greater builder too. He went to war, and marched westward, and nobody could stop him. He went up to Jerusalem and besieged it, and though the inhabitants held out for a long time, he took it at last, plundered the Temple, and marched the people hundreds of miles across the desert

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

to Babylon. Then he went on down into Egypt, which had been such a mighty nation, and conquered that also, and so subdued all the peoples between Babylon and Egypt. He was indeed a mighty man. Yet there was something else he needed to do, something that would have made him a mightier man still—he needed to conquer himself; but he did not and would not: he was proud and vain because of the countries he had subdued and the great Babylon he had built. And because he would not conquer himself, God let a madness come upon him for four years, in which he thought he was an ox, and he went and lived in the fields, and ate grass like an ox. Then God brought him again to his right mind, and he saw his folly, and did a greater thing than conquering cities—he conquered himself.

There was also another great Emperor and General who lived after Nebuchadnezzar, but who is not spoken of in the Scriptures. I mean Alexander the Great. He was certainly a very marvellous man; but I always read of his great doings with the regret that he did not conquer one thing more, and that was himself. It is said that he longed for other worlds to conquer

THE GREATEST VICTOR

because he had conquered all that was upon this ; but there was a world within his own heart, and it was a pity that he did not start on that. He carried everything before him except his own hasty and passionate spirit, and that carried him.

One day, when Alexander was sitting at dinner with one of his famous generals, whose name was Clitus—a general who had once been instrumental in saving Alexander's life—simply because Clitus praised the deeds of Alexander's father more than he praised Alexander's own, his pride was touched and his anger was aroused, and he suddenly pierced him through with a javelin. Who can hear this story and not think of the words of our text : " He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty ; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city " ?

In the Gospel by St. Matthew there is recorded our Lord's parable of the two sons. One of them, you will remember, answered his father, and said that he would go and work in his vineyard ; but he did not go ; the other answered bluntly and hastily, and probably in an angry mood, that he would not go ; and the very next words

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

we read are : “ But afterward he repented and went.” We like that son ; we can tell the struggle that went on in his own mind and heart—how he fought with himself, how at last he conquered his wilfulness and anger, and in the end had complete victory over himself, and went. That was an instance in which our Lord was setting before His disciples the very same lesson that we are considering, viz. : how good a thing it is for us, and how acceptable a thing it is to God, that a man should conquer himself. “ He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty ; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.”

And now, why have I talked to you young people about all this ? It may be that you have not got very far in wilfulness. You may even think that it would be a very good lesson for some grown-up people, but hardly for you. But the reason is this : we must train ourselves by God’s aid and by God’s grace, from our very earliest years. There are some things that will be harder to do when we are grown up than when we are young. It will be harder to rule one’s spirit, harder to conquer one’s self, harder to give one’s heart to Christ. God

THE GREATEST VICTOR

has even given us our childhood and youth in order that we may find some things easy. As you look out into life, you see and feel that there are many mighty things to be done, and you are already hoping that you may do some of them. God grant that you may! But you will always be thankful if from this day you remember that there is something better than to be mighty—it is, to be slow to anger; something greater than taking a city—it is, to rule your own spirit. He is the greatest victor and his is the greatest victory who conquers himself.

VIII

Silent Voices

"The heavens declare the glory of God. . . . There is no speech nor language, their voice cannot be heard."

—PSALM xix. 1, 3 (R.V.).

I HAVE used the Revised Version because it helps us to understand better what the Psalmist meant. David, who was the author of this Psalm, was a man full of poetry ; that is, he was full of very beautiful thoughts, and saw a great many beautiful things in the world which most other people miss. And one part of this great world of nature, which was especially interesting to him, and that had a great attraction for him, was the heavens. So, nearly one-half of the Psalm from which our text comes is taken up with beautiful thoughts and sayings about the heavens.

Sometimes our own heavens are clear,

SILENT VOICES

and appeal to us as very beautiful ; but in the Eastern sky, which is so much clearer, the stars stand out more brilliantly, and would thus be yet more suggestive and beautiful. So we may be sure that David, who, as we remember, was a shepherd lad, would find something to interest him through the long watches of the night as he had found something to interest him through the day. It was in the daytime that he had amused himself by practising with his sling and stone ; it was in the daytime also that he had made himself skilful upon the harp—both of which attainments came in so usefully to him afterwards, the one when meeting Goliath, and the other when solacing King Saul. So in the nighttime we may suppose that he would watch those heavens with an inquiring wonder. He would see the constellations rise and set, and would be calculating on the time of their return ; he would mark the fixed stars, and these and other things would not only interest him, but would speak to him great and solemn truths.

And they did speak, and what they told him he has written down for us in this Psalm. "The heavens," says he, "declare the

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

glory of God"; they speak, but "there is no speech nor language, their voice cannot be heard." Their voice is a silent voice; they speak, but what they say is not audible to the natural ear. They remind us of the great fact that there are more ways of speaking than one. There are voices which are silent, but, though silent, tell out many things. There are such voices in the firmament; there are silent voices in the earth, for does not Job say, "Speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee"? And there are silent voices in men and women, and it is about these silent voices that I wish to speak.

Let me show you first of all how that the stars have very real voices, though silent. You answer, "Oh, but the stars haven't voices any more than the trees or the fields or the clouds have, and all these tell of God to the man who can read them." But I answer that you are wrong, and that the stars have voices in a special sense. First of all, what do we mean by a voice? Do you mean simply a sound? No; the report of a gun is a sound, but it is not a voice. A voice surely is that which can convey a meaning, and so make something known

SILENT VOICES

to us—which can answer our question and direct us in the way we want to go. Can the fields or the trees or the clouds do that? No, but the stars can. And that is what the stars were doing many hundreds of years before and after the time of Christ.

Suppose, now, you had been in one of those caravans crossing the great deserts of the East, how could you have travelled at nighttime except the stars had told you the way? Those men of the caravans knew their way by the stars, and that is how the Magi were able to make their way across the sandy wastes between Persia and Jerusalem at the time of the birth of Christ. Or again, suppose you had been a sailor on one of the ships of those centuries before the magnetic needle or loadstone was discovered. What would you have done if there had been no stars? You would have been lost on the great sea but for them to guide you; you would have been going out into the great watery wastes of the ocean but for the direction they gave you; you would not have known the east from the west if they had not told you; darkness upon the sea would have been a great terror to men but for the company and the con-

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

versation of the stars. So the stars really were voices in a special sense, speaking to men, and directing them, even though they were silent voices.

The only voices some people have got are, like the voices of the stars, silent voices. If we were in that great city of London, I could take you to a church where there would be a large congregation, but there would be no organ ; there would be hymns, but there would not be a sound ; they would all unite in prayer, and there would be responses, but you would not hear them ; there would be a minister, and he would preach a sermon, which they would all understand, but not one word would be spoken. Their voices are all silent voices. You will almost think this a riddle, but it is not. The church is the church of the deaf and the dumb.

What a glorious thing it is for these people that it is not necessary to have a voice in order to speak, or however would they talk to one another or pray to God ?

Every man has at times silent voices that are speaking out of him. For instance, there was one occasion when the Scribes and the Pharisees said of some of the fol-

SILENT VOICES

lowers of Jesus, although they had not been told it, "These men have been with Jesus." They did not need that any one should tell them, they knew it of themselves; not that they had seen the men with Jesus, but there were silent voices speaking from out of those men. Perhaps the Pharisees could tell it by the joy they saw sparkling in their eyes; perhaps they saw it in the quiet determination of their countenances; perhaps they marked it in the new character it had given them.

And sometimes I think that it may have been the silent voices speaking from out of Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, which betrayed him when he went into his master's presence. Perhaps Elisha saw at once his guilty look after he had been to Naaman, and by telling the lie had got the gold, the silver, and the raiment; or it may be that silent voices were speaking in other ways.

You may suppress your natural voice by closing your lips, but you cannot so easily suppress your silent voices. You have power over your tongue, and you can speak or not as you please, but you have not the same power over the voices which speak from out of your eyes, strange as it sounds,

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

or from out of your countenance, or your rough or gentle bearing. Usually we only think of the words the lips utter, and are only particular about them, and we forget all about what our silent voices may be saying, and they may be saying all the time good or bad things about us, as the case may be.

Sometimes our silent voices tell sad things about us. It is not always necessary to speak bitter things by word of mouth for people to see that there are bitter feelings in our hearts. We need not say that we are selfish in order to show that we are selfish. Sometimes our silent voices speak more loudly than our natural voices do, and our actions, by means of which our silent voices speak, show more clearly than our words could the bitter and the selfish feeling in our hearts. If a man were to tell me one thing with his natural voice, and a silent voice from out of him told me a different thing, I should be inclined to believe the silent voice, for that voice would speak the loudest to me.

And so your looks, the kindness or unkindness with which you do an action, the character which peers out of your eyes,

SILENT VOICES

these and other things are all silent voices speaking from out of you, and sometimes they tell very sad things about you. The sad things we have known of most people have not been told us by themselves. We have read them in them ; they could not keep their eyes from speaking, strange as it sounds, nor their looks from talking, and though they themselves were silent, yet other voices in them spoke.

Our silent voices may be made to speak very noble things if we will. That is the glad part about this subject. If they speak sad things, it is our own fault ; we can make them, if we will, speak very noble things. The heavens, says David, whose voice cannot be heard, declare with their silent voice the glory of God ; and if the heavens, which are not made after God's image and likeness as we are, which have no heart, no will, no feelings, in their silent way set forth God's glory, how much more ought we !

The silent voices which spoke forth from Christ said very noble things. When we read that, looking on the rich young ruler, He loved him, we feel that His look was a voice ; when He sat with the despised sinners

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

and publicans, we feel that the act of itself was a silent voice saying very gracious things ; when Christ was in the judgment hall and Peter stood there too among the crowd, and our Lord turned and looked on Peter, that look was a silent voice which said many things, all of which Peter heard and understood, for he went out and wept bitterly.

God listens for our silent voices and in His judgment of us hears what they have to say. The noblest things that men have ever said have been said with their silent voices. Let us see to it that when our silent voices speak they always say noble things, that we, like the heavens, may declare in our silent way the glory of God.

IX

The Children's Future

“And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.”

—ZECHARIAH viii. 5.

THE Bible has a great deal to say about children, and that is one reason why children love it. Many other books have no room for talk about the children, but the Bible has. In several places it speaks of children playing. Ah! children have always been children, then, for they love to play to-day. It tells how wise children are a comfort to their parents; how disobedient children make very heavy hearts and sad homes. It has a lot to say about the education of children, and much more about the duty of children; and, above all, it tells how Jesus watched the children at their play in the market-place,

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

and how they were welcomed and blessed by Him.

The boys and girls helped to make the history of the Bible. When men are doing something great, they say, We are making history to-day, and they are proud of it. When some great measure is passed in Parliament by some prominent statesman, giving liberty to millions, or when a general wins a great battle, or when a scientist makes an important discovery, they are all said to be making history ; that is, they have been doing something which coming generations will read of and talk about. So in the Old Testament, Moses, Joshua, Elijah, and many others we might name, all helped to make history.

But so did some of the boys and some of the girls of the Bible. Did not Joseph when he was sold as a lad into Egypt ? Did not Daniel and the three lads who were carried away with him into Babylon ? Did not the little maid of the land of Israel who waited on Naaman's wife, and who was instrumental in the recovery of the great Syrian captain from leprosy ? Yes, these all helped to make history. They had their place, and an important one, in the doings of the times. They

THE CHILDREN'S FUTURE

were used by God in a special way for the blessing of men.

I was going to say that the Bible is partial to children and young people, except that you might not quite understand what I mean. Yet as we do love those who take an interest in young life, so we can't help loving the Bible. It does not hold the child or the youth back simply because it is a child or a youth. It gives Samuel, though only a child, a place in the Temple; it anoints David to kingship though but a stripling; and has for ever made childhood sacred in the account it gives of the early years of our Lord Jesus Christ. As we have already said, in some great books there isn't room for the children, but in the Bible there is.

Come now, and see in our text what a very beautiful thing the Bible says about the children: "And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof."

The prophet Zechariah is painting a beautiful word picture; he is painting the Jerusalem which is to be. At the time he was speaking the hearts of all holy men and women were pained because of the state the city was in. A great many people had come back from

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

exile, but they had come back to a city in ruins and to a temple in ruins ; and, sad to say, there were enemies who hindered them in rebuilding, and there were also sins in the lives of some of the people, which added to the sadness and disorder.

But yet there were good men and holy women amongst them, and these the prophet wishes to encourage. Yes, not only does he wish to encourage them, but he has received from God a special message, a special prophecy for them. Jerusalem or Zion is yet to be great, and so at God's prompting he draws a beautiful picture of the future city. Let us read just a few words of the prophecy. He says—

“ Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth, and the mountain of the Lord of Hosts a holy mountain. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts : There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.”

What a picture to feast the heart upon !

THE CHILDREN'S FUTURE

Old men and old women shall be seen dwelling in Jerusalem, every man so advanced in his age that he needs his staff to support him. Not as it had been—the streets deserted, the people carried into captivity, the young men going off to the wars and perishing there, pestilence and famine cutting off men and women in the prime of life. No ; but men and women living on to a happy old age in peace and quiet ; coming to their grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season.

But we have not got all the beauty of the picture yet. There is something still more attractive, something more tender, something which appeals more powerfully to us ; there is something of dancing, laughing joy yet remaining. We have it in the words of our text : “ And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.” What brightness these words give the picture ! We see children's faces wreathed in smiles, we hear their joyous shouts, we watch them flitting to and fro, we mark the smiles of the aged men and women leaning on their staves as they see them at their play. Oh, the picture would not be nearly so complete nor so beautiful

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

if it were not for those boys and those girls playing in the streets. Such, then, was God's picture, God's promise, God's future for their beloved city Jerusalem.

“And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.”

There is an inference that we may draw from these words which concerns the young people ; it is this : God's future is a good time for the boys and the girls. When God looks forward to the future city, He does not think of the men and the women only—He thinks also of the boys and the girls. They have a place in His thoughts and a part in the life of the city ; there is to be happiness for them.

But that is not only so with respect to the future Jerusalem ; it is always so. God's future for boys and girls is always a bright one. They start in the world with God's smile and good wishes. The whole course which lies before them is bright with God's promise. No one is more interested in their welfare than is He. He follows them with interest in every step of the way. God's future for them is a very bright one.

Why, then, is it that so many who start so

THE CHILDREN'S FUTURE

favourably end in sadness and darkness ? We may be sure of this, that it is not God's wish. God would have been to them, if only they would have let Him, a better friend than they were to themselves. They never rose to God's great and beautiful idea of what their future was to be. God would have put joy into it, but they put sorrow ; He would have made strong men of them on whom many others would have leaned, but they robbed their own lives of all manliness.

All this is one great reason why you should love God. You can no longer feel that He is only the God of the grown-up people when you find Him so wonderfully interested in youthful life. And it is so necessary that you should feel this, otherwise you will shrink from God as you shrink from some people. You feel that their views of youth—its incompetence and its inexperience—dwarf your life, and you leave them in despair of yourselves. Because they have despised your youth, you are apt to despise it too, and to think that the time for anything noble or useful has not yet come. But if you would rightly understand God you must remember the very different way in which He looks at

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

your youthfulness ; to Him it is full of freshness, of promise, and of interest, and when we feel this about God, we no longer shrink from Him ; we recognize at once that He is on our side and does not despise us, and all our powers and faculties, instead of being dwarfed, come to be valuable endowments which may be wisely used for our own blessing and happiness and for God's glory.

When you remember the marvellous way in which He led some of the young people of the Bible—led them to usefulness and happiness ; when you remember how He preserved them amidst their dangers and false charges, and brought them out at last to stand in the full light, so that all men might see their truthfulness and their righteousness, surely you must feel that these things are all proofs of His readiness to serve even the youngest among us. Did He not remember David amidst the sheepfolds when the members of his family had almost forgotten to mention him to the prophet Samuel at all because of his youth ? God is not too great to think of the young people, nor is He too concerned about other things to grant them His help. He did not forget to give them a place in the future He planned for Jerusalem, and it

THE CHILDREN'S FUTURE

was a place of playful happiness. In the future He plans, every one of you has a place, and it will be your fault, not His, if that place is not one of peaceful joy.

X

The History of a Lie

“And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy firstborn.”

—GENESIS xxvii. 19.

WE are to trace this morning the history and consequences of a lie. We are greatly grieved, when we read this chapter of Genesis, at the deception Jacob practised upon his father Isaac. Jacob takes such a prominent place in Scripture history, and in many respects is to be so greatly admired, that we are shocked when we know of this falsehood of his practised in word and deed. Perhaps we wonder why God caused all this to be recorded about Jacob; would it not have been well to leave it out? We should not have thought less of Jacob—probably more. But then God does not wish to paint the Old

THE HISTORY OF A LIE

Testament heroes other than they were. In these days, biographers sometimes start upon the writing of a life with the distinct purpose in view of making all they can of their hero, and so they suppress some adverse things and magnify those things that are good. God's purpose was not to do all He could to make us admire Jacob ; He rather caused his life to be written with its blots as well as its brightness, that we might take warning from it in some respects and admire and copy it in others. God has recorded the history of these men for a special purpose—not only to interest us, but to profit us. He wishes us to see how the right turned out when they did the right, and how the wrong turned out when they did the wrong. Nor must we be surprised to find that the men of the Bible were human even as we are, and were subject to the same slips and falls which mark us.

In this matter of the deception practised by Jacob, God wished us to see some very important things. We often read about this lie, but we usually fail to see the consequences which followed ; we sometimes even think that he did this mean and wicked thing, and

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

went unpunished, and all the time, if only we would think about it, we should see that the punishment and the sad effects lasted through all his life.

God wishes us to see also by this deed that our life is a whole ; that a momentary deed is sometimes lifelong in its consequences ; that though the deed is done, and is done by one single effort, the punishment remains. Often we do a wrong deed and think that it is but a momentary thing, that it is passed and has been left back in the distance ; but sometimes the effects of it, or the disastrous consequences it works out, are felt every day we live, and so it is precisely as though we did that deed afresh each day. Life is a whole, it hangs together, and what is done in any part of it and at any moment of it affects the whole. An evil deed or a lie seem to us the things of a moment, but in their consequences they are as if they took a whole life of days and months and years to do.

The one sin which stands out in Jacob's early history is the lie which he both told and practised on his father. He hastily prepared a dish, while Esau his brother was absent, and then went in to his father, and professed to be Esau with the dish of venison.

THE HISTORY OF A LIE

The aged Isaac, perplexed by the voice, which rightly seemed to him to be the voice of Jacob, was led to mistrust himself by what Jacob falsely told him, and not suspecting his son to be capable of so mean a deceit, partook of the food he had prepared, and gave him his blessing.

Now, while to steal and to lie are both sins in the sight of God and punishable by God, yet to tell a lie is a meaner, baser thing than to steal. It is meaner and baser because other people are more at our mercy ; it is taking a great advantage of them. And yet, because a lie is not as a rule so quickly found out as a theft, we are the more readily tempted to sin in that way ; but I hope from this morning that you will begin to look upon a lie as a weak and unmanly thing, and so altogether unworthy of you, as well as a wicked thing in the sight of God.

But there is more to be said about a lie than that, as I wish to point out in Jacob's history. I want you to remember this, that we never know where a lie is going to end, nor what its consequences will be, nor how severe its punishment will be, nor how long that punishment will last. Sometimes a lie that has gone from the lips has never been

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

able to be called back again, and often the sad effects which have followed have been disastrous beyond anticipation.

I should like you to see how this was so in the life of Jacob. I don't think he would have told that lie if he had known all that it was going to involve. He probably did not think of the future at all, or if he did, he supposed it would be but a momentary matter and pass away.

In order to see the consequences of that lie, I want you to look at four people with me, and at the home in which they live. First of all we must try to picture them before the lie is told, and then we will look at them afterwards. There were but four in the family, the father, the mother, and two sons ; they lived away out on the sunny plains of Canaan, feeding their cattle and resting at eventide in the cool of their tents, and talking of Abraham and God's dealings with him and His promises to him. And a happy family we can imagine them to be. Often they would wonder together over those promises, and try to imagine their descendants a great and glorious people, and the very land on which they were, the country of that people ; why otherwise should both brothers have

THE HISTORY OF A LIE

so coveted the birthright and the blessing ? They would rejoice in the great inheritance to which they were called, and would be drawn together by their faith in the Living God, whilst the people round about them were persistent in their worship of their false gods and in their horrible religious rites. Abraham, who was the father of Isaac, had come into the land as a stranger or foreigner, and they themselves would still be looked upon in much the same light, so that nearly all their happiness, we may be sure, would be found within the circle of their home life.

But now look at them after that terrible deceit has been practised by Jacob. First of all we must go right away from those sunny plains of Canaan to the north-east, to Mesopotamia. There in a field is a man minding sheep. He looks sad ; he is evidently a stranger to the land, the people, and the customs. If you were to watch him day after day, you would find that he inquires very anxiously, of any travellers he may see, if they came from the south, and if they knew the old man Isaac his father and Rebekah his mother, and if they did, he would next eagerly inquire how they were. And

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

if you could read his thoughts, often there would be longings to go back to them, but he dare not ; and many and many a time, when he sits and thinks of his aged parents, tears come into his eyes, and a deep sorrow fills his heart because of his hard lot. That man is Jacob, and all that has come about through the lie he told. How do we know it, do you ask ? Why, we know it out of our own hearts. Jacob was human as we are ; he thought as we think, he felt as we feel, and if his circumstances had been ours, is not that how we should have thought and felt ?

Come now and look at the home itself from which Jacob had been obliged to flee. There is only one son there now, and he goes about the house full of all evil feelings. He is never bright and joyous as he used to be, but is always brooding over a great wrong that has been done him. What a terrible thing to have been the cause of such angry feelings in another's heart ! And all that has come about through the lie.

And there, too, is the mother—often and often her heart hungers after her son in the far land. She would not be a true mother if it didn't. When she is alone, she thinks

THE HISTORY OF A LIE

of him, and longs and longs again for a glimpse of him ; but she knows she dare not expect him. She has never been the same woman since he had to flee from the home, and the home has never been the same home. And all that has come about through the lie.

And there also is the aged father, weaker than ever now, and often talking about his absent son, and wondering why he never comes ; even when no one is with him he can be overheard talking to himself. Sad is it that the old man's closing days should have this great sorrow to darken them. He wonders whether after all the promises of God will come to anything. He asks himself, "Is not all this sin and misfortune frustrating them ?" He has to struggle to keep fast hold of his faith. And those years which should have been the calmest and the most joyous close in sorrow and agitation. And all that has come about through the lie.

And so the years go by, and the mother dies before the father ; and though she greatly longs, she never sees her son again. And then the father dies, and though he wonders greatly about this absent son and the promises

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

of God which are to be fulfilled, he never sees his son again. And from the day the lie was told the home was broken up, and all happiness was gone ; and the closing days of the parents' lives were made sad by the memory of their son's sin.

Such is the history of the lie I set out to consider with you.

Do you not now begin to see how that when once a lie is spoken you cannot tell what misery it may bring, nor where it will end, nor how great its punishment will be ? We have tried to look at this family in the light of what our own feelings would be if one of our own homes were called to pass through a similar experience. That was a home like ours ; they were pained and grieved and felt contrition, and passed through all the various moods of feeling, just as we do ; so that from out of our own hearts we may judge as we have done the effects of a lie on that home, and on those who were there.

In order that we may know how terrible a thing any form of deceit is, and how certain it is to bring its own punishment, God has recorded the history of this lie for us. It is for our warning, and that it may drive us to

THE HISTORY OF A LIE

Him with the earnest prayer that He will keep our lips from sinning in this way, and ever make us look upon a lie as a weak, unmanly, and wicked thing.

XI

“ God heard the Voice of the Lad ”

“ And God heard the voice of the lad.”

—GENESIS xxi. 17.

WE have here a very touching story. It is the story of a mother and her lad who are lost in the desert ; whose food and water are spent, and whose strength is gone ; and who are absolutely alone in the midst of the desolate waste. We have often read, doubtless, of the terrible experiences of those who cross the deserts of the East, and sometimes we have seen pictures of Death in the Desert, and we have turned away with our hearts pained at the tortures such travellers must have endured before death set them free.

There is something of this same sad picture set before us here. There seems nothing before this loving mother and her child but death. Her mother's heart is torn with

“ THE VOICE OF THE LAD ”

anguish at the thought of the child she is unable to help. What shall she do ? She cannot see him die ; she has no water to give to quench that consuming thirst of his ; there is nothing she can do but look round for the very coolest and shadiest place in that barren waste, and there to place him and to leave him till God shall call his young spirit home to Himself.

How great is a mother's love ! Exhausted though she was, and suffering herself acutely, she yet forgets herself in the sufferings of her child and will not place him down anywhere to die, but will find if possible some spot out of the burning heat of the sun. Her quick eye catches sight of a shrub not far away ; under that she places him ; then she goes to a distance—our narrative especially tells us the distance—not so far that she could not see him at all, but about the distance of a bow-shot, where her eyes could still see if anything should befall him, but where she would not see his sufferings, which were harder to her to bear than her own tormenting thirst. And there, we read, she lifted up her voice and wept. What grief is there to be compared to that of a mother who is helpless to aid her suffering child ?

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

There is now, in the narrative, a very wonderful and beautiful incident. Now it is that we read : " And God heard the voice of the lad." " Of the lad," mark you. We should not have been surprised had we read God heard the voice of the mother ; but before He hears the voice of the mother He hears the voice of the lad. God's pity, just like the mother's pity, goes out to the lad. He thinks first of the more helpless one of the two. It is the little lad who quickest touches His Divine sympathy. Not that He has no compassion for the suffering mother ; He has, but the voice of the lad is more powerful in its appeal, more urgent to Him than even the cry of the mother, " and God heard the voice of the lad."

Such is the beautiful and touching fact in the narrative. It has something to say to every lad. What boy or girl, youth or maiden, can hesitate to love such a Being ? It reveals in an exquisite way His tenderness and His interest in young people. The needs of their young hearts are a matter of concern to Him. Their sufferings appeal to Him even more powerfully than the sufferings of those who are older. He has sympathy for all. He especially has sympathy for those who

" THE VOICE OF THE LAD "

are least able to help themselves. This incident is a proof of His good, kind, loving nature. As we read of it, it inspires our confidence in Him. Do you fear that He may have changed since those days ? It is not so ! for while all others change and all things else alter, there is One of whom it can be said that He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and that One is He who in that day heard the voice of the lad.

This text and incident must, however, come home to us in a yet more personal way. You are lads, many of you, and the great thing I wish you to remember is this : God hears the voice of the lads to-day. That voice of yours, which rings out so clearly in your play, God hears. Those words which you called to your playmate across the common or in the cricket field, God heard. That which you whispered to your intimate companion, and was meant for him only, God heard. God hears the voice of the lads to-day.

God hears the voice of the lads when they are at play. If this is so, the playground becomes a sacred spot ; it may be God was in that place and you knew it not. It may be all this, and yet there need not be less

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

joyousness or less happy, laughing fun. In one of the ideal pictures of the prophets the great joyousness of the future city is set forth in the words, "The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof." If the children did not learn, they would fall short in a part of what is especially intended for the time of youth ; and if the children did not play, they would fall short in another part of what was especially intended for youth. To learn with a will and play with a will is to fulfil a large part of the duties of youth. But we are sorry to have to say that the voice of the lads and the words of the lads, when they are at their play, are not always what they ought to be. God's name is sometimes taken in vain, and God will not hold him guiltless who taketh His name in vain. Sentences are at times boldly shouted out which we should be ashamed to utter in our homes. Impure words are often uttered, it may be thoughtlessly or from habit ; but whether from thoughtlessness or from habit, still there can be no excuse for them. Surely from this time our text will be a check for you. God hears the voice of the lads ; the words which are uttered in your play are re-echoed

" THE VOICE OF THE LAD "

in heaven, and the sorrow and regret we feel, as sometimes those words grate upon our ears, are increased when they come to the ears of Him who is absolutely pure and holy. When we say that God hears the voice of the lads at their play, we say it, not that there may be less play or fun, but that the words in the play and the motive in the fun may never sink to coarseness or wickedness.

God hears the voice of the lads when they are within school or in business. He hears every word we say, and makes no mistake in it. He knows when the truth is spoken out boldly, or when we cover our fault with a lie. He catches the very tone of the voice, and knows by the tone whether the truth is only half a truth. The words we tell to our master are just as much told to Him. In every school He stands and in every business. He hears the words when the hero in us speaks, and He also hears when the coward in us comes to the front. He knows when we have suffered for the truth rather than tell a lie, and He knows when the truth suffered through us because we acted a deceit. To the honest fearless boy it is the greatest joy that God hears ; to the deceitful boy it should come as a most solemn and awful fact.

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

God hears the voice of the lads in the times of their temptation. There is no cry goes up to God more quickly than the cry : " O Lord, deliver me ! " Our prayers may not be long ; we may not know how to put many sentences together, but then the prayers which express the greatest needs are always the shortest. At such moments all our feelings and all our thoughts are crowded into one brief expressive sentence, and the force of the prayer is not in the words themselves, whether few or many, but in the eager, anxious heart behind them. In those times when we stand before a great temptation and feel that it is drawing us on, almost against our wills, if in the one moment that is ours, before we absolutely fall, we can look up and say within ourselves, " O Lord, deliver me," it is a cry that rings through heaven ; it is a voice that God hears ; and the distress and the need of any lad at such a moment wins at once the sympathy and the aid of God even as did the need and the distress of the lad in the desert.

God hears the voice of the lads in prayer. Communion with God is possible even to our youthful nature. There is always a best in us, in our early years as well as in our later,

“ THE VOICE OF THE LAD ”

and that best is always, though perhaps unconsciously, feeling after God. A lad has his desires and aspirations, and a lad often brings them into prayers. He desires very eagerly this or that, an opening in business or a calling in life, and he prays about it, prays, it may be, not in the best way, as he would think in his later and maturer years ; he asks, it may be, right out for the success he wants or the thing he desires. In later years he learns to say : “ Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done,” but not so in his early years. Yet notwithstanding the confident directness of his prayers, there is a frankness in them which God loves ; God will hear the voice of the lad in prayer. Not that God will always give him what he wants, but He will so control and direct his life that whether God gives what he desires or not, he shall have more satisfaction and happiness than even that gift could bring him. Lads, pray ! for God hears your prayers.

Take, then, this text for your warrant ; let none rob you of it. Though others say you are only a lad, remember these words, and answer, “ Though only a lad, God hears the voice of the lads.”

XII

Above Suspicion

"Abstain from all appearance of evil."

—I THESSALONIANS V. 22.

Now who is to say that even so well-worn a text as this cannot tell us some interesting things and some things well worth knowing? If we were to take our Bibles and cross out all the texts which have become uninteresting to us because they are so familiar, what a long list we should have, and how many blank spaces there would be! We should be surprised at the amount of Scripture we had destroyed. You say that we should have destroyed the pages only, and that they could easily be replaced. That is true in so far as the printed book is concerned, but is it not also true that we have actually destroyed those passages in so far as their helpfulness to us is concerned? If we turn away from

ABOVE SUSPICION

words of Scripture because their familiarity has taken away their meaning, then it is the same as though we had lost the passage, or as though it had never been written, and gradually we shall be losing more and more of the words of Christ; our Bible will be getting smaller and smaller. Recently eight new sayings of Christ's were found on two very ancient pieces of papyrus, or paper made from reeds, and men everywhere were greatly excited over these new sayings. It is very pleasing to find new sayings, but it is very sad to be losing the old. We ought, therefore, to determine that we will never pass a passage by because it has become uninteresting by its familiarity.

Let us come to our text in this spirit: "Abstain from all appearance of evil." Probably you have read these words many times; possibly you have filled the whole page of a copybook, line after line, for twenty lines or more, with this same sentence. Yet we will not discard it. To start with—anything that speaks of "appearance" is at least speaking about something that is well understood to-day. There never was a time when appearance was so considered—not only in people, but in things. The very

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

furniture in our houses — the mahogany furniture and the oak furniture—are only mahogany or oak in appearance. They are covered with a thin shaving of mahogany or oak, as the case may be, and underneath there is a commoner wood ; so they are not what they appear to be. It is so with many people, unfortunately : they appear to be gentlemen, or learned, or good, or Christlike, but it is all an outward covering. There is no depth of character or learning or goodness in them. They only study appearances.

We have to learn from our text that just as there may be goodness in appearance, so there may be evil in appearance. Sometimes people are deceived by the appearance of goodness in a man, and for a time take him to be a good man ; they make him their friend, and they trust him, perhaps to their sorrow. On the other hand, we have to notice this important fact, that there may be the appearance of evil in a man, and others may take that man to be an evil man ; which is a very serious thing for him, and for the family to which he belongs, and for Jesus Christ if he professes to be a Christian. He is not actually evil, but something he did, because he was not careful or thoughtful, had the

ABOVE SUSPICION

appearance of evil, and sometimes the mere appearance of evil will work out the same unfortunate results as the evil itself.

Some of you will say, But we don't attach any importance to the goodness that is mere appearance ; we know that it only seems to be goodness ; we know that it is of no value ; and that God, who sees all things as they really are, doesn't reckon it as goodness. Why, then, you ask, should we not say the same about that which only seems to be evil ? God sees and God understands, and, no matter what men say, God won't reckon it as evil to us.

It is true that there are some people who like to answer in that way. There are some who are so vain and so proud of their being just as good that they have said, I don't care about a thing seeming to be evil ; if it is not evil, God knows that it is not. I don't care, they say, what men may think ; in fact, they rather like their goodness sometimes to look like evil because they like to surprise people.

Surely those who so act have forgotten this text. They have also forgotten that Paul once said that some things are lawful but not expedient. They do not remember that Jesus also said that Christian men and women

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

furniture in our houses — the mahogany furniture and the oak furniture—are only mahogany or oak in appearance. They are covered with a thin shaving of mahogany or oak, as the case may be, and underneath there is a commoner wood ; so they are not what they appear to be. It is so with many people, unfortunately : they appear to be gentlemen, or learned, or good, or Christlike, but it is all an outward covering. There is no depth of character or learning or goodness in them. They only study appearances.

We have to learn from our text that just as there may be goodness in appearance, so there may be evil in appearance. Sometimes people are deceived by the appearance of goodness in a man, and for a time take him to be a good man ; they make him their friend, and they trust him, perhaps to their sorrow. On the other hand, we have to notice this important fact, that there may be the appearance of evil in a man, and others may take that man to be an evil man ; which is a very serious thing for him, and for the family to which he belongs, and for Jesus Christ if he professes to be a Christian. He is not actually evil, but something he did, because he was not careful or thoughtful, had the

ABOVE SUSPICION

appearance of evil, and sometimes the mere appearance of evil will work out the same unfortunate results as the evil itself.

Some of you will say, But we don't attach any importance to the goodness that is mere appearance ; we know that it only seems to be goodness ; we know that it is of no value ; and that God, who sees all things as they really are, doesn't reckon it as goodness. Why, then, you ask, should we not say the same about that which only seems to be evil ? God sees and God understands, and, no matter what men say, God won't reckon it as evil to us.

It is true that there are some people who like to answer in that way. There are some who are so vain and so proud of their being just as good that they have said, I don't care about a thing seeming to be evil ; if it is not evil, God knows that it is not. I don't care, they say, what men may think ; in fact, they rather like their goodness sometimes to look like evil because they like to surprise people.

Surely those who so act have forgotten this text. They have also forgotten that Paul once said that some things are lawful but not expedient. They do not remember that Jesus also said that Christian men and women

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

were to be both wise as serpents as well as harmless as doves. And we may be sure that the Apostle Paul, if he had heard such people talk, would have said, "They may be very just people, but they are not very wise ; they may be good, but, at the same time, they are very foolish."

We have to remember, then, that it is not enough to have a conscience free from the sense of evil in God's sight, but we must also have a life free from the appearance of evil in man's sight."

Very sad and serious consequences have often followed where there has been merely the appearance of evil. There were, last year, in the prisons of this country, one hundred and sixty-two thousand persons ; and we may with safety say that there were many in prison who were not actually guilty, but who were condemned because of the appearance of evil in them. Possibly now many men and women are undergoing unjust sentences ; they could not clear themselves at the time of their trial, and appearances were so against them that they were condemned. It is sure to be so in the very nature of things. They happened to be on the spot at the time some theft or crime was

ABOVE SUSPICION

committed, or their past life was found to be far from satisfactory, and these circumstances condemned them ; they could not get away from the appearance of evil.

Appearances are often followed by serious consequences in other respects. For example, you remember that Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, joined Ahab, King of Israel, in war against Syria. Ahab disguised himself so that he could not be known, but Jehoshaphat went into the battle clothed in his royal robes. Now the King of Syria had especially commanded his soldiers to slay King Ahab ; so, when they saw Jehoshaphat dressed as a king, they began to attack him, supposing him to be King Ahab. His appearance was against him, and, as a consequence, he nearly lost his life.

We see, too, in other spheres the same fact illustrated. There are some snakes that are really very beautiful, and that are also harmless. Some of them are so timid that they will glide away under the leaves at the first signs of approach of any one ; but because in appearance they are very like to other forms that are poisonous, they unfortunately share the fate of those that are harmful, and are killed at once. Their

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

appearance is an unfortunate thing for them.

Possibly some of you boys and girls know something about this from your own experiences. It may be that at school appearances have so gone against you that, say what you would, you were judged by the appearance, and, though not guilty, were punished. A false appearance, after all, is a very serious thing.

We are also told to abstain from all appearance of evil, because it brings us into too close neighbourhood with what is evil. If we get into bad company, though not ourselves bad, it is just possible that we may be drawn into evil. The Zulus have a strange belief which very well illustrates what we mean. You know that in the African rivers there are great crocodiles, and that there is small chance for a man if he happens to be bathing in a river and a crocodile seizes him. So wily are these animals, and so much do the natives dread them, and moreover so anxious are they to warn people against them, that they say and believe that a crocodile can draw a passer-by into the water if only it can get hold of his shadow ; so that the Zulus will not so much as let their shadow

ABOVE SUSPICION

fall on the water, for fear they should be drawn in.

That is just what our text means. If there is the mere shadow of evil, or simply the appearance, it is possible that by means of it you may be drawn into actual sin. For example, suppose we see a boy standing at the street corner with other boys, and we hear those other boys using bad language, or we see them doing evil deeds; then, though he be not evil, there is the appearance of evil about that boy; and because he is in company with evil boys we think him evil. And though there is now only the appearance of evil, it will not be long before there is actual evil. It is for this reason also that we are exhorted to abstain from all appearance of evil.

Moreover, there are some things which, though not wicked, are unwise, and these things we are urged to avoid. Don't do anything that would give others the slightest suspicion that you are not acting honourably or uprightly. Don't do anything that might seem to be stealing, though it is not; don't say anything that even seems to be a lie. We have to be above suspicion—our conduct so open that it cannot be mistaken; our words

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

so clear, so plain, that they cannot be misunderstood.

The Chinese have a curious proverb ; it is, " Don't tie up your shoe in a cucumber field." It is another way of saying, " Abstain from all appearance of evil." If you were passing through a cucumber field, of course all the cucumber vines would be running along the ground, and on the vines there would be the cucumbers, and though you stooped down only to tie up your shoe, others might think that you had stooped down to steal.

Are you as particular about your life as this text says you should be ? Do you not only abstain from evil, but do you abstain also from even the appearance of evil ? We have to remember not only what we are, but to think also of what we may seem to be. And all this we have to do not for our own sakes merely, but for the sake of the Gospel and for the sake of Jesus Christ. We may personally be indifferent as to what people think of us—as far as ourselves are concerned, we may think a clear conscience everything ; but if our action shall lead to disastrous consequences in other directions, if it shall bring discredit on Christ, we cannot be indifferent as to what others think of Christ.

ABOVE SUSPICION

But who can make us so wise that we shall be able to keep ourselves above all suspicion ? Only He who kept His own life above all suspicion ; and so free was He from all evil, or appearance of evil, that He could boldly ask, “ Which of you can convict Me of sin ? ” Let us ever remember that it is a solemn and serious thing to have even the appearance of evil.

XIII

Faithfulness

“And Ittai answered the king, and said, As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be.”

—2 SAMUEL XV. 21.

WE are all touched by deep affection whenever and wherever we see it. Even in an animal it affects us ; the dog that is faithful to its master to the end delights us. Our love of the dog has come about principally because of its affectionate and faithful nature. We are still more pleased, however, with the fidelity of a servant to his master, for it is possible in some instances to find those who have stood between the master they have loved and death ; but most of all are we charmed with the action of such an one as this Ittai, whose faithfulness was so great that he could say : “As my lord the king

FAITHFULNESS

liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be."

This, of itself, tells us at once what a great thing Fidelity or Faithfulness is. He who is absolutely faithful does not let anything in life, nor even the fear of death itself, separate him from the one he loves. Such noble conduct touches us when we see it in others, and will touch others when they see it in us.

The story of Ittai and David is a very charming story. The first thing that strikes us in it is the fact that Ittai was not of the same nation and kindred as David. He was a Gittite ; that is, he came from Gath, and as Gath was a Philistine city, we may suppose that he was a Philistine. Indeed, it has been thought that he was the son of Achish, King of Gath, and that, having formed this close friendship with David, he had been banished from his father's court on that account ; for, as we know, the Philistines were enemies to Israel. We might expect some one of his own nation to show such an affection for the king, but hardly a stranger. We have something similar in the story of Ruth the Moabitess and her affection for Naomi.

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

The story of Ittai and David is this: David's son, Absalom, fearing that the throne of his father David, who was now getting old, would go to one of his brothers, determined even before his father's death to seize the throne for himself, and we all know the days of bitter grief which followed for the good King David while he was being hunted from place to place by the harsh conduct of this unkind son. And we know, too, the sad but deserved end which overtook Absalom, and also of David's grief on learning that his son was dead—grief which expressed itself in those words that even now, when we hear them read, seem to carry in them the pain which wrung them from the heart of the father: "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

Our story commences in one of the early days of these sad doings. A messenger suddenly comes to David with the startling intelligence that the hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom, and also probably tells him, as we read in the verse preceding our text, that the conspiracy is strong. The king, all unprepared for such news, can do nothing but fly; and so he commands his

FAITHFULNESS

servants to make speed to depart, lest, as he says, "Absalom overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword." Thus the king goes forth, and all his servants, we are told, pass on beside him.

Then, it may be, while they are making preparations to go, or perhaps when they have already started, David sees that Ittai the Gittite is going too. But why should he fly before Absalom? it is not against him that Absalom is likely to come; he has his own country and his own city to go to if he will; at any rate, he need not become a homeless wanderer as David was called to be. And as the king utters those generous words: "Wherefore goest thou also with us? return to thy place, for thou art a stranger and exile. Whereas thou camest but yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us? . . . return thou." And Ittai answered and said, "As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be."

What was the reason of this noble conduct? His heart had gone out to David; and when

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

our hearts go out and we love with a deep affection, then we do not forsake what we love. The heart has such a power of clinging that we can be quite sure of the conduct of a man when we know that his heart is in what he does. He will be faithful ; he will be the first to help in the time of need, he will be the last to go out in the time of danger ; when his affection for another is a strong, warm, and deep affection, he will do for that other what he would not even do for himself.

This is always so. Let me tell you one or two stories which illustrate what I mean. Christ has said, "Where a man's treasure is, there will his heart be also." When gold is what a man most of all values, his heart will be with his gold, and he will cling to it to the end as the miser does. If he finds his greatest interest in other things—in art, or in literature, or in music—there will be his treasure, and his heart will be there ; he will forsake other things for them, and will love them even as a man loves his friend. Whatsoever or whosoever we love we shall serve ; to them we shall cling to the end ; other things may go, but we shall not let them go.

FAITHFULNESS

There is a story concerning Julius Caesar which illustrates this. You know that he was a great emperor, but you may not know that he was also a great historian and mathematician and law-maker. This same Caesar wrote some volumes of history of great value, which are known as Caesar's *Commentaries*; these he used to employ himself on even in his marches. One day the army came to a broad river which had to be crossed, and there was no means of crossing it but by swimming. Now what one thing do you think he was most concerned about? What one thing do you think he saved when he let all else go? It was the manuscript of his *Commentaries*, for he swam across the river with his *Commentaries* or histories in his mouth. It shows us where his heart was, and the keen interest he had in them. Surely he must have been a real historian as well as a great soldier.

But I have something finer than that to tell you. Sometimes men have loved the art they pursued more than they loved themselves. They have thought of their work in the same spirit in which a man thinks of his friend, and they have sacrificed their own feelings, and in some instances risked their

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

own lives, for the sake of the art they have loved. In a certain gallery of Fine Arts in Paris there is a most exquisite statue, not in stone, but in the sculptor's modelling clay. This is the story concerning it—a story which also shows us when we love we cling to that which we love until the last. A sculptor lived in Paris. He was very poor, but a great genius. He dwelt in a miserable attic in a lonely street, where he had only one room, which had to serve him for dining-room, bedroom, and studio. At this time he was working at a statue. He was very anxious that it should be a success, and as he went on working he saw it growing in beauty day by day. At last he had moulded it in the clay in which all statues have first to be moulded, when one night a heavy frost fell over Paris. The poor sculptor woke out of his sleep with the cold, and his first thought was of his statue. As he lay there the idea suddenly came to him that the moisture in the clay would freeze, and that the statue would crack and fall to pieces, and so undo all the months of anxious thought and labour which had been devoted to his work. At once he rose, and taking the clothes from off his bed, he wrapped them round his statue.

FAITHFULNESS

The next morning the sculptor lay dead from the effects of the cold from which he had so eagerly saved his work. Here, again, there is an illustration of the fidelity of which we are speaking. We serve that which we love, whether an art or a person, regardless of ourselves.

But I have what will ever seem to me a still more beautiful story to tell. It is the story of Ittai and King David repeated in later times, except that instead of Ittai we have the martyr Polycarp, and instead of David the king, our Lord Jesus Christ. It sets forth this same quality of fidelity in a yet more exemplary way. Polycarp was a Christian who lived at Smyrna between seventeen and eighteen hundred years ago, so that he lived not very long after the time of our Lord Jesus Christ, and is said to have been the disciple of the Apostle John. Towards the close of his life a fierce persecution of the Christians broke out, and so bitter was the hatred of the people against those who professed to be followers of Christ that they called out for Polycarp, "the father of the Christians," as they termed him, although he was eighty-six years of age. When Polycarp heard this, his quiet reply was, "God's will

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

be done." So they seized him and brought him before the proconsul, who urged him to blaspheme Christ and live. Polycarp's noble and ever-memorable reply was : " Fourscore and six years have I been His servant, and He hath done me no wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King who hath saved me ? " With these noble words upon his lips this venerable man went to the stake. Do you not seem to hear again those words of Ittai's ? " As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be."

When we give our heart, it makes such a difference ; there can be no faithfulness apart from it, and that is why we ask nothing less of you than that you should give your heart to Christ. Only in that way can we be sure of you. Only as you deeply love Him will you loyally serve Him. When your affection goes out to Him, you will think of Him long before you think of yourself, as Polycarp did ; your affection for Him will keep you from forsaking Him, and, if need be, you too will be faithful unto death. He is worthy of our love ; He is our King, and He hath saved us ; love Him as we will, our

FAITHFULNESS

love will never exceed His for us. Only where there is love will there be faithfulness, for without love faithfulness is difficult and irksome, but with love it is easy and a delight. It will be a happy day for us when, looking up to Him, we can say with wholeheartedness, "As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be."

XIV

For the Sake of my Brothers and my Playmates

“For my brethren and companions’ sakes I will now say, Peace be within thee.”

—PSALM cxxii. 8.

“FOR my brethren and companions’ sakes” —I wish to put this text into a little different language, so that it will be exactly the text for a children’s service. We must by no means alter it so that its meaning is changed, but we may alter it if we can still keep its meaning and yet make it more than ever applicable to our present service. It reads : “For my brethren and companions’ sakes.” Suppose now for “brethren” we put “brothers,” and for “companions” we put “playmates,” and then see how it stands. It will then be “For the sake of my brothers and my playmates.”

MY BROTHERS AND MY PLAYMATES

Surely by this slight alteration we have gained something. It brings the text right into our schoolboy and schoolgirl life, and we feel at once that the text applies peculiarly to us.

With such a text I think that we have got a most admirable start. With so good a text I think we ought to learn something. Nothing could be more suitable for a children's service than the words: "For the sake of my brothers and my playmates." The first part of the text, For the sake of "our brothers," carries us back to our homes, and the second part of the text, For the sake of "our playmates," carries us back to the playground. The whole text makes us feel what the Lord Jesus Christ through all His ministry was trying to make men feel, that the religion He taught was for every day, in every home, in every business, in every place. Now if a man's religion is for him at every time and in every place, so must a boy's religion and girl's religion be. But the places where boys and girls spend their time are as yet very few—principally in the home and in the school. And the sorts of people with whom they meet are few—chiefly their brothers and their playmates. So that this

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

text, "For the sake of my brothers and my playmates" is especially a text for boys and girls.

But turning to the text as it stands in the Book of the Psalms—what was it that led the Psalmist to exclaim, "For my brethren and companions' sakes I will now say, Peace be within thee" ? In the Psalm from which these words are taken he is talking of Jerusalem, and is singing the praises of that holy city. He is glad because the House of God is there, and the ark of God which was the symbol of the Divine presence. He is praying for the peace of the city. If the Psalmist were David, as the heading says, we might answer that it was natural for him to do so, for he was a king there. True, but his heart is larger, less selfish, and more thoughtful than merely to think of himself, so he exclaims: "For my brethren and companions' sakes I will now say, Peace be within thee." And it is precisely that thoughtfulness and that unselfishness and largeheartedness which his words reveal that make them so full of meaning to us.

Just as David felt that there were other reasons why he should pray for the peace of Jerusalem beside his own personal inter-

MY BROTHERS AND MY PLAYMATES

ests, and that those other reasons were the interests of men and women who probably loved that city quite as much as he did, so are there reasons why we should encourage the habit in our very early years of looking outside ourselves and doing things not only for our own sake, but also for the sake of our brethren and our companions, or, as we have preferred to put it, for the sake of our brothers and our playmates.

And why have I stated this text in words which especially suit the circumstances of you young people? Because I wish you to learn that opportunities of thinking of others and of doing helpful deeds for others commence very soon in life. You all have brothers, you all have playmates; you all can begin to-day to be thoughtful, and to do kind deeds for the sake of your brothers and your companions.

The home and the playground have very much more to do with our after life than we think. There is a saying that the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playgrounds of Eton. The saying means that the Duke of Wellington was an Eton boy, as were many others of the officers who had part with him in that great battle, and that their games as

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

boys on the Eton playgrounds were a preparation in boyhood for the stern work of Waterloo in after years.

I think that in a similar way, if we could only trace their lives, we should find that many a noble, useful, and holy life was commenced in the playground—commenced by boys who thought of their brothers and of their playmates, and who for their sakes often did kind things. Noble men do not suddenly enter on noble lives; they more often grow up to be noble men from being noble boys. Greatness in those things that are mental, moral, and spiritual is not attained to in a moment. The graciousness, thoughtfulness, and kindness which seem to go forth from some people so naturally, and which invariably mark them, are all the effects in after life of the character they early struggled to form in themselves. We must accustom ourselves in our early years to do generous deeds if we wish to find it easy to do generous deeds when we are older.

All the noble stories of heroism which you read in history and in your story-books have been done by men who were utterly unselfish, and who acted alone for the sake of their

MY BROTHERS AND MY PLAYMATES

brethren and companions. He who is selfish, and will not think of any one but himself, will never do a great deed for the sake of others ; indeed, he is incapable of anything great at all.

In the Indian Mutiny, the eldest son of Sir Henry Havelock had been wounded and left lying on the battle-field. It was known where he was, but to attempt to get to him meant to be fired on by the Sepoys. A young soldier whose wife and child had been locked up in Lucknow, without thinking of what might befall himself, could not bear to leave his companion there, so he went in search of him. As he was going, the bullets of the Sepoys fell round about him, and one of them struck his arm and shattered it ; but he would not turn back. He went on until he found the wounded son of Havelock and commenced the difficult task of bringing him into safety. As he was returning, another bullet struck him ; but he would not relinquish the wounded man for whom he had gone in search. At last, with great difficulty and in intense pain, he brought him into safety. But the noble deed so generously and self-sacrificingly done cost him his life, for he was immediately carried to the hospital

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

and there died. Was not that done for his brethren and companion's sake ?

Sometimes there have sprung from very humble life deeds which illustrate this text. In the moment of certain death men have stepped into the place of their brother or their companion. In one unassuming Christian act, they have summed up the meaning of the self-sacrificing life of Christ. Thomas Carlyle tells the story of such a deed. Two miners had gone down the shaft of a Cornish mine to prepare a charge of powder for blasting the rock. They had nearly finished their work when one of them thought that the match which was to fire the charge was too long ; so taking a sharp stone, he tried to cut it shorter. He succeeded, but at the same time kindled the match. Both saw their danger and sprang to the basket which would draw them to the surface ; but one only could be drawn up at a time. Both men felt that they were facing instant and horrible death in the explosion which would follow, when one of them, generously forgetting himself, cried to his companion : " Go aloft, Jack ; in one minute I shall be in heaven." Jack was hastily drawn to the surface, and the explosion followed. With hope-

MY BROTHERS AND MY PLAYMATES

less hearts they afterwards descended, but to their unbounded joy found that the rocks had so arched themselves over their friend that he was safe. Is not that one of the best possible illustrations of our text?

When we read of the remarkable life of St. Paul, and remember how he was shipwrecked, stoned and left for dead, imprisoned and finally martyred, and yet how that he did it all not for his own sake, but for the sake of his Jewish and Gentile brethren and companions, we feel too that from his life we get an illustration of our text.

And yet a nobler example still than St. Paul—even the example of Jesus Christ—teaches us the same lesson that we ought not to think only of self, or look at life from our own point of view merely, but that we should remember the claims of our brethren and companions. Christ became man not for His own sake, but for our sake. He endured the taunts and insults of priests and Pharisees not that He might gain anything for Himself, but that He might gain something for us. He suffered the Cross for the sake of His brethren and His companions.

It is only he who has a large and warm heart that will say, “for my brethren and

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

companions' sakes." It is only the boy who is unselfish, who is thoughtful, who is magnanimous who will show that spirit the Psalmist here shows.

But he who can be thoughtful and unselfish in that way, and who in the home and in the playground can feel that his brothers and his playmates have a claim on him, and who will often do things for their pleasure and for their help, is following in the footsteps of the bravest and noblest men who have ever lived. There will be no littleness or meanness in his life. He will not stoop to the selfish things which make the lives of so many despicable. Even in boyhood and youth he will show signs of his coming greatness. Life will be a large and holy thing for him. All noble deeds will be pleasing to him. He will have fellowship with every spiritual hero. He will admire such lives as St. Paul's, and will worship Him who, in taking on Himself our human nature and in enduring the Cross, did all things, not for His own, but for His brethren and companions' sakes.

XV

The Narrow Way

“Narrow is the way which leadeth unto life.”
—MATTHEW vii. 14.

THIS is hardly a children's text, for the ideal children's text does not talk about narrow things nor hard things. The narrow things and the hard things are left for a later time in life usually, and only the bright things and the attractive things are talked of. Of all people children least of all like to be cramped or confined; they especially like freedom and room.

Now Jesus loved the young people as He loved all men and all women; but that did not keep Him from talking to the rich young ruler about hard things and about a narrow way. And the rich young ruler was, alas! as some of us are—he did not care to hear about hard things or a narrow way. He

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

too wanted plenty of room—more room, in fact, than Jesus had to give him, and so he went away. But I hope that none of you here would go away from Jesus as he did because you wanted easier things and wider things than Jesus had to give you.

But if Jesus speaks to us of what is narrow and hard, He is not the only one who so speaks to us. We do not even begin any study, say the study of music or of drawing or painting, or the study of any other branch of art or science, before we soon discover that our teacher or master is talking about hard things; and we soon learn that if we are to make progress with him we must accustom ourselves to hard things, for the way to proficiency in any study is also a narrow way. And though we are only boys and girls, we are too much men and women to turn from these accomplishments because they are hard; so we settle down with all the more determination for a stern struggle with them, and though the way is difficult and narrow, we are determined that we will travel it.

If we will not give up when our teachers in such things tell us that the way is hard, and if we feel that the prize at the end is worth all the effort, surely we are not going to treat

THE NARROW WAY

Jesus in a less manly way, or value the spiritual prize at the end less than we value the mere accomplishments of life. Jesus is our great Teacher and Master in those things that are spiritual, therefore when He says that the way which leads to life is narrow, He has told us nothing more than all our masters have told us ; therefore I am sure that you will resolve not to turn away from Him because of that.

“Narrow is the way,” said He, “which leadeth unto life.” Life was a very prominent thing in the mind of the Jews ; of course life is a prominent thing in our minds, but it was prominent in theirs in a different way. Their first parents had been sent away from the Tree of Life, and they wanted to know how they could get back to it. They felt that they had lost something, and they were asking where they could find it again. St. John, in the Book of the Revelation, having this idea in mind, speaks of the Tree of Life in the midst of the holy city, the New Jerusalem, and in the beautiful picture he there gives us, man is once more admitted to that from which he had been driven.

But our Lord Jesus Christ in speaking of life meant something more than the ordinary

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

Jew had in mind. Jesus teaches us that to live is a great deal more than to move and have our being, something more than to eat and drink. Just as in the animals, which also live and move and have their being, there is a life below us, so in God and in His Son and in the Holy Spirit there is a life which is above us—it is a life which is holy, and peaceful, and beautiful. To have this life active in us is to truly live ; it is to have God's life and power working in us, God's peace filling our hearts, and God's love lighting all our way. This is what Jesus meant by life, and this is what we mean too. We don't think a man truly lives until he lives with God's life in him and with God's love filling his heart.

Jesus said, then, in effect, If you want to find this life and to make your way to it and receive it, you will find that it is a narrow way which leads to it ; it is as though you were travelling a very narrow path, with places where you had now to squeeze yourself through, now to pass along a narrow ledge, now to clamber upward, with every step more difficult than the last. It is as though Christ said, It's not going to be very easy, for it is not easy to get anything in life worth the

THE NARROW WAY

having, and why should we expect to get spiritual blessing, which most of all is worth having, in an easier way than the attainments of the world? We have to pay by labour and diligence and earnestness for all the attainments of life, and shall we expect to pay less for spiritual attainments?

Others have tried to illustrate what Christ means by our text. Good men before the time of Christ, and since, have seen that the way into life is not easy. In ii. Esdras, a book written about a hundred or a hundred and fifty years before the time of Christ, there is a representation of the way into life, or into Paradise; that is, back again to that Tree of Life from which Adam and Eve were driven. The writer depicts it in a very graphic way. He says that if you wish to get back into Paradise, if you want to enter into the eternal city, you will find it a very narrow way. The entrance to it is a very difficult one, and it is, as it were, along the edge of a precipice; and on either side of this way there is danger; it is so narrow that you are likely to fall, but if you were to fall it would be a very serious thing, for on the left-hand side of this way there is a deep and rushing water, and on the right-hand side

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

there is a scorching fire. And every one who would enter the city has to pass along this way, and very careful must he be how he walks.

We can understand the writer's meaning ; he is saying in a different way the very thing Christ is telling us. He means by it that we do not gain heaven easily. It calls for our seriousness and for our determination if we are to win it. He wishes to save us from thinking that spiritual attainments are so easily got that we need not trouble ourselves much about them.

Then, too, the Mahommedans have also pictured the narrowness of the way. They have likened the road into Paradise to a narrow bridge that spans over a great gulf—not such bridges as you are acquainted with, but narrower than any that has ever been seen ; the bridge, say they, is as narrow as a razor's edge, and only the righteous will be skilful enough to cross it.

Here, too, the illustration emphasizes the narrowness of the way, and it also teaches one other thing, and that is, that according to our righteousness so is our skill in travelling it. The righteous will be safe where the wicked fall, and that is true both according

THE NARROW WAY

to our experience and according to the Scriptures.

But John Bunyan's wonderful story of Christian, as set forth for us in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, is perhaps the most interesting and helpful of all the illustrations of the narrow way. Christian starts upon a journey from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City, and almost at the commencement of his journey he has to pass in at the wicket gate into the narrow way. Sometimes that way is so steep that he has to go on his hands and knees ; sometimes it is running along the edge of a precipice, from which he looks down into the awful depths below ; often he meets those who have turned back because of the hardness of the way, and at times he sees the bodies of those who have fallen from some dangerous height. Bunyan also pictures for us the temptations there are to forsake the hard and narrow way for those ways that are easier and broader. He tells us that on one occasion Christian and his companion found the way so rough and so hard, and it made them so tired and their feet so sore, that they went forward with great difficulty ; yet, running side by side with the narrow way, there was a broad field with a soft

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

carpet of grass inviting them to end their hardship, and though they knew they ought not to leave the narrow way, they yielded to the temptation, and, getting over the stile, went into By-path Meadow, as it was called. But soon the darkness came on, and they lost their way, and could not find the stile again, and it ended by Giant Despair casting them into his castle.

Through all his *Pilgrim's Progress* Bunyan is illustrating for us the meaning of our text, and teaching us that just as in this life we do not get anything worth the having easily, so is it in spiritual things.

There is yet one other illustration of the narrow way which I should like to speak of. There are dense forests in Africa, some of which extend for very many miles. There are no roads through them; there are no clearings. Here and there there is an opening where the light may creep through, and now and again you can catch sight of the sun, but very rarely. And yet men travel through those forests—the natives do, and sometimes white people. But when they travel, they all travel in single file—that is, one behind the other; and so, since they all go over the same ground, it becomes a hard

THE NARROW WAY

beaten track, but very narrow. There is only room for one on it, and this narrow track winds in and out through the forest, seen a little way here, and then lost as it disappears round yonder tree. Men are all right so long as they keep to it; if they leave it they will be lost in the forest, and perhaps not find the track again for many days, or it may be not at all.

The narrow way Christ speaks of is like the way through the forest. We are all right so long as we keep to it, but we can soon get off it. We go, so to speak, single file; Christ goes first, and we follow after, and it is the way all the saints of God and all good men have trod.

As Christ has said, so even the best and the strongest men have not found the way easy; but they travelled it, for they found they could do all things through Christ; and we who are also called to travel it will not turn away from it because it is hard; but there is one thing we will do—we too will seek the same Christ, through whom we also can do all things. We will not be less brave or less persistent in this matter than we are in other things; we will not let Christ think that we can be manly or womanly in our pursuit of

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS

the attainments of this life, whilst we cannot be manly or womanly for the attainment of the spiritual life. The way may be narrow, but we will attempt it with a good heart, for “we can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us.”

Index of Anecdotes and Illustrations

	PAGE		PAGE
"A little Kingdom I possess"	60	Church of the Deaf and Dumb	86
African Forests, their Narrow Tracks . . .	154	Covetousness, Tolstoi's Story	64
Africaner, the Heathen Chief	28	Covetousness of Gehazi	69
Alexander, Greatness and Weakness of . .	78	Discipline necessary to the good Soldier . .	45
Ambrose, Bishop of Milan	26	Esdras ii. and the Narrow Way	151
Appearance of Evil to be avoided	121	Gehazi's Covetousness . .	69
Battle of Waterloo won at Eton	141	God's Future for the Children	96
Boy's Religion, for every Day, in every Place .	139	God's Interest in Young People	112
Boyhood and Girlhood a time of Preparation .	35	Harmless Snakes destroyed with poisonous Hassan Ben Omar, Story of	52
Boyhood and Girlhood hallowed by Christ's Boyhood	34	Havelock, Sir Henry, ideal Christian and Soldier	44
Carlyle's Story of Cornish Miners	144	Havelock's Motto	48
Child's Power to Influence	29	Heroism, Deeds of	143
Childhood, illustrates Truth	22	Heroism of Jesus	145
Chinese Proverb, Cucumber Field	126	Heroism of St. Paul	145

INDEX

	PAGE		PAGE
Indian Mutiny, Incident from	143	Power of the Gospel seen in the Runaway Slave	19
Ittai and David, Story of	129	Prophet's Picture of Joy	39
Jehoshaphat, King of Judah	123	Rehoboam and his Bad Counsellors	57
Julius Cæsar and his <i>Commentaries</i> . .	133	Robert Louis Stevenson's <i>Letters</i> , Incident from	28
King, Meaning of the word	51	Robert Robinson, of Cambridge	37
Life, and what Jesus meant by it	149	Roman Centurion, The .	41
Louis XIV. and his Copy-book	46	Roman Senator's death avenged by the execution of 400 slaves . .	12
Mahommedans and the Narrow Way	152	Samoan Warriors led by a Child	28
Napoleon's Old Guards Napoleon on Need of Good Counsellors . .	47	Silent Voices of Christ .	89
Nebuchadnezzar, and his Unconquered Self . .	77	Slaves in the Roman Empire, Condition of	12
Nothing worth having got easily	150	Story of Ittai and David	129
Parable of the Two Sons	79	The "Sayings (or <i>Logia</i>) of Jesus"	119
Paris Sculptor and his Statue	134	Theresa and her Infant Son	27
Parents led by child into Kingdom	25	Tolstoi's Story on Covetousness	64
<i>Pilgrim's Progress</i> and the Narrow Way	153	Truth illustrated by Childhood	22
Playground a Sacred Spot	113	Voices of the Stars . .	84
Polycarp, the Christian Martyr	135	Word-Picture of the Prophet Zechariah .	93
		Zulus' Strange Belief concerning their Shadow	124

H. R. Allenson's Recent Publications

GREAT MOTTOES WITH GREAT LESSONS.

Talks to Children on "Mottoes of Great Families," etc.

By Rev. G. CURRIE MARTIN, M.A., B.D.

Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

Glasgow Herald.—"The mottoes are those of leading families, of towns, and of ancient institutions, and it can readily be understood how these lend themselves to skilful comment, moral in aim, but as displayed by Mr. Martin—who has a happy fund of anecdote and illustration—abundantly interesting to the young folks."

Christian World.—"Mr. Currie Martin is to be congratulated on having conceived the happy idea . . . and he is to be equally congratulated on the bright and interesting way in which the idea has been carried out. The result is that of the numerous volumes of 'children's sermons' published in recent years, his own is among the best."

The Spectator.—"In this volume we have a good idea, well executed. Discourses, suited to young hearers, have been constructed, with the sentiment of some motto of a family or a public body for their central purpose."

The Examiner.—"A wealth of fresh illustrations, drawn from history and biography, from science and general literature. . . . Mr. Martin Currie has struck a rich mine, and has brought fine gold from it."

WORDS TO THE CHILDREN.

Twenty-six five-minute Addresses.

By the Rev. B. J. SNELL, M.A., B.Sc.

Crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

Daily Chronicle.—"We submit to the advocates of more definite religious teaching the inquiry whether this kind of thing is not more useful and durable than instruction which implies that theology has a basis such as the multiplication table."

School Guardian.—"Very crisp and fresh; full of story and incident, teeming with tenderness and thought. Most beautiful are the words on Easter Day and Christmas Day. It is a real pleasure to read such a book."

Literary World.—"These addresses reveal a positive genius for reaching the hearts and minds of children. Mr. Snell understands the child-mind, and, without 'talking down'—which children abominate—he presents, in simple, homely language, lit up by apposite stories and incidents, the truths he wishes to emphasize in a winsome and persuasive way."

1 & 2, Ivy Lane, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.

H. R. Allenson's Recent Publications

THE GOOD FATHER.

Previously entitled "Le Bon Dieu."

Twenty-six five-minute Addresses.

By the Rev. B. J. SNELL, M.A., B.Sc.

Crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

Daily News.—"They are full of instruction, delightfully imparted in a way that will make children think and remember."

Manchester Guardian.—"Their freshness and simplicity deserve recognition, and many on whom falls the far from easy duty of addressing children might take a hint from their manly, straightforward tone with profit."

Literary World.—"Few preachers have Mr. Snell's gift of direct and simple speech to children. These sermonettes are models of their kind. They are rich in happy illustration, and are fresh and vigorous in style."

TALKS TO CHILDREN ON BUNYAN'S "HOLY WAR."

By the Rev. CHAS. BROWN, Ferme Park, Hornsey.

Crown 8vo, cloth, 1s. 6d. net.

A series of Sunday Morning Talks to the Young People of his congregation. The Holy War has often been tried by preachers as a subject for children's addresses, but the publisher questions if it ever has been so successfully accomplished as in this instance by Mr. Brown.

Aberdeen Daily Journal.—"The Rev. Charles Brown has certainly a 'wonderful way' with the young folks, and these Sunday morning talks are models of addresses to children—simple and direct."

Christian World.—"The lessons of the story are brought home all the more effectively because there is not too much insistence. The addresses have been published in response to a widely-expressed desire. Many parents will be glad to have them to read to their children."

Glasgow Herald.—"Mr. Brown has performed extremely well the task which he has undertaken. The main features of the allegory are reproduced in simple and suitable words."

Baptist Times.—"The addresses are as bright and cheery as they are wise and practical."

1 & 2, Ivy Lane, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.

GOOD NEWS

ALL

GOOD NEWS

who have read and enjoyed

"GOLDEN WINDOWS"

will be interested to know of the publishing of the under-
named new work by the same author

FORTY-FIVE FRESH
CHARMING STORIES

Handsome Cloth, Gilt top, Crown 8vo, 2s. 6d. net

THE SILVER CROWN

ANOTHER BOOK OF FABLES

By LAURA E. RICHARDS

Author of

"Captain January," "The Golden Windows," "Five Minute Stories," &c.

CONTENTS OF THIS SUGGESTIVE BOOK:

The Silver Crown.
The Grumpy Saint.
The Housekeeper.
Brother Barnabas.
If this should be. I.
If this should be. II.
Gillyflower Gentleman.
The Sermon.
The Nurseling.
The Potter.
The Neighbour.
The Wound.
The White Fire. I.
The White Fire. II.
The Burning House.

The Fates.
The Steps.
The Glass.
Hell Gate.
The Thorn.
The Serpent.
The Feast.
The Spirit.
The Roots.
The Cake.
The Pit.
The Pot.
The Body.
The Ruler.
The Plant.

In the Shaded Room.
Along the Way.
The Grave Diggers.
The Sick Child.
At Long Last.
The Judgment.
The Blind Child.
Wormwood.
Hospitality.
The Torch Bearer.
The Stone Blocks.
For You and Me.
The Picture Book.
The Flower of Joy.
The Tangled Skein.

Had there not been "Golden Windows," the Publishers could speak of "The Silver Crown" as the freshest volume of choice imaginative work published for very many years.

LONDON

H. R. ALLENSON, Ltd., Racquet Court, Fleet Street, E.C.

Small 4to, Handsome Cloth, 5s.

FIVE MINUTE STORIES

By **LAURA E. RICHARDS**

Author of "Captain January," "The Golden Windows," &c.

With Numerous Illustrations by E. B. Barry, A. R. Whelan,
and others; many of them full-page

A charming collection of a hundred short stories and clever poems for children. The Money Shop, The Two Calls, Buttercup Gold, The Little Dog with the Green Tail, The Boy's Manners, are stories that will be told again and again when once they have been read, but where all is so good it is invidious to make distinctions. These stories have the same winsomeness which characterised "Golden Windows," while at the same time showing the wonderful range of Mrs Richards as a humorous story-teller and inventor of ingenious rhymes. The jingles in this book are as captivating as the immortal lyrics in "Alice in Wonderland."

Primary Education.—"Every mother who takes her little child upon her knee will feel the worth of this book for story reading. Mrs Richards seems to have anticipated every mood and every liking of children in the variety of story and verse she has provided for their delectation. Innocent fun, bewitching jingle, touches of tenderness, and bits of wisdom are all mingled together, as bright and fleeting as are the varying emotions of the little folks who will enjoy them. The children have found a fairy godmother for story-telling in this famous author who never seems to find the end of her resources for making the little ones happy."

Crown 8vo, Cloth gilt, Gilt top, 1s. 6d. net

CAPTAIN JANUARY

By **LAURA E. RICHARDS**

Author of "The Golden Windows," "The Silver Crown," &c.

Twenty Illustrations by Frank T. Merrill

This is a perfect story-idyll, dealing with a picturesque old lighthouse-keeper, Captain January, and a baby-girl, Starbright, whom he rescued from drowning, and brought up in his island home with, as he quaintly expressed it, "the Lord's help, common sense, and a cow." The affection of these two for one another is beautifully expressed.

Certainly one of the books that once begun will not be laid down till finished.

Glasgow Herald.—"In the pretty little volume entitled 'Captain January' Mrs Richards has provided a treat for young readers. Both the young girl and the old man are cleverly and charmingly portrayed. The volume is a delightful one, and as pretty as it is delightful."

Liverpool Daily Post.—" 'Captain January' is a charming little romance, capable of being read with great profit by both young and old. The authoress seems to be one of the very few present-day writers of fiction who, in searching for the real touches of nature which make the whole world kin, have really found the nugget."

The Guardian.—"It is very prettily told, and the waif of a wreck bred up by the old lighthouse-keeper on the Bible and Shakespeare is an exceedingly pretty picture."

Over one hundred and thirty thousand of this touching
story have been sold

LONDON

H. R. ALLENSON, Ltd., Racquet Court, Fleet Street, E.C.

Second Edition, Handsome Crown 8vo, Cloth, 2s. 6d. net
Uniform in size with "Golden Windows." With Twelve Choice Illustrations

THE LEGEND OF THE SILVER CUP AND OTHER STORIES FOR CHILDREN

By the Rev. GEORGE CRITCHLEY, B.A.

Methodist Times says:—"Rarely have we come across such a delightful series of 'Legends' as the dozen so beautifully told by Mr Critchley. They all illustrate Scripture truths in such graphic style as to hold the attention of all young people, and they teach the lessons very clearly without being too obtrusive. We thank the author for the book, which will be a great help to those who speak often to children."

The Record.—"A series of short allegories which will please and instruct. Many young people have a special fondness for symbolic teaching, and we are sure this attractive little work will prove a great favourite."

S.S. Chronicle.—"We have read some of them to children, and have had no rest since from the demand, 'Read us another.' It is not often that one comes across a book for the Sunday hour with children that one can recommend so heartily and unqualifiedly as 'THE LEGEND OF THE SILVER CUP.'"

Two charming volumes in the favourite small square size
1s. net each

A TALE OF SIX LITTLE TRAVELLERS

Written and Pictured in Delightful Colours

By Mrs ARTHUR GASKIN

"One of those dainty books of rhyme and line for children. The coloured pictures will furnish endless amusement as the little ones kneel or stand at mother's knee, and she takes the illustrations as the subjects of endless stories of thrilling adventure."

"A charming little book of pictures of Kate Greenaway children."—*British Weekly*.

The Colour-printing is by Edmund Evans. Parents will recall KATE GREENAWAY's delightful illustrations as rendered by this firm, and the work in these little volumes fully maintains the old standard of excellence.

THE CINDERELLA OWL-BOOK

Written and Pictured in Vivid Colours

By MARY LINDSAY GORDON

"Among the many illustrated story books for little children 'The Cinderella Owl-Book' should be very popular. Cinderella and her sisters and all the other characters in the fairy story are represented as owls. The illustrations are beautifully drawn, and tell the story in themselves."

LONDON

H. R. ALLENSON, Ltd., Racquet Court, Fleet Street, E.C.

WHAT SHALL I TELL THE CHILDREN.

By Rev. GEO. V. REICHEL, M.A. Thirty-seven Object Sermons with many Illustrative Anecdotes. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d.

Second Edition.

British Weekly.—"It is rather a nice book, and will be very useful to teachers and those who preach to children. The merit of the volume is that it has freshness."

Christian Commonwealth.—"Contains a wealth of illustration."

THE MOUNTAIN PATH. Forty-four Talks to

Children. By Rev. JOHN A. HAMILTON, Author of "The MS. in a Red Box." Crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

Examiner.—"One of the most delightful children's books we have met with for a long time. Each talk is based on some fable or story, or on some fact of nature with which an ordinary walk through garden or field may make one familiar. These addresses, spoken or read, must capture the children, we are sure."

FIFTY-TWO SUNDAYS WITH THE

CHILDREN. A New Volume of Sunday Morning Talks to

Children. By Rev. JAMES LEARMOUNT. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

Dundee Advertiser.—"Has the rare and happy art of saying things brightly and in a way likely to haunt the juvenile memory."

British Weekly.—"Brightened with many telling illustrations, well adapted to their purpose."

FIFTY-TWO ADDRESSES TO YOUNG

FOLK. By Rev. JAMES LEARMOUNT. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d.

Third Edition.

The Examiner.—"The addresses are all rich in fresh and apt illustrations from science and legend, from literature and human life, and among all these there is not one 'chestnut'! Ministers and others who have to speak to young folk should look into this volume."

GREAT MOTTOES WITH GREAT LESSONS.

Talks to Children on Mottoes of Great Families, etc. By the Rev.

G. CURRIE MARTIN, M.A. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

Spectator.—"In this volume we have a good idea well executed. Discourses, suited to young hearers, have been constructed, with the sentiment of some motto, of a family or a public body, for their central purpose."

Christian World.—"The result is that of the numerous volumes of children's sermons published in recent years, his own is among the best."

Something entirely new for the Children

FORTY BIBLE LESSONS AND FORTY

ILLUSTRATIVE STORIES: Or, The Bible in Lesson and Story. By R. M. BROWN. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

Second Edition.

Forty chapters upon Bible truths and Bible characters, each chapter written in a manner that will immediately interest the children. Accompanying each lesson is a delightful illustrative story, together with a "Memory Gem" and an "Occupation," in which the children are given something to do that will help impress the truths that have been taught. There is a wealth of information and suggestion about this book that will delight all who have anything to do with the training of children.

This book is strikingly new. Ministers and other speakers will find the numerous good stories eminently useful for illustrative purposes.

LONDON

H. R. ALLENSON, Ltd., Racquet Court, Fleet Street, E.C.

New Edition. Handsome Cloth. Crown 8vo, 1s. 6d.

THE GOLD THREAD. A Story for the Young.
By NORMAN MACLEOD, D.D., Author of "The Starling," "The Old Lieutenant and his Son," etc.

A handsome new edition printed in large clear type, with the eight full-page illustrations newly reproduced by modern process, and an Introduction contributed by Dr DONALD MACLEOD.

TALKS TO YOUNG FOLK. Seventeen Addresses to Children. By Rev. G. HOWARD JAMES. With Index of Subjects and Anecdotes. Crown 8vo, 2s. 6d. *Second Edition.*
Literary World.—"Simple, practical, easily understood, brief and interesting."

THE GOOD FATHER. Twenty-six Addresses to Children. By the Rev. BERNARD J. SNELL, M.A., B.Sc. Crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d. *Second Edition.*

Newcastle Daily Chronicle.—"Charming addresses to children, simple, homely, childlike instructions."

Manchester Guardian.—"Bright and vigorous, full of stories drawn from a wide range."

WORDS TO CHILDREN. Twenty-six Addresses by Rev. B. J. SNELL, M.A., B.Sc. Crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

Glasgow Weekly Leader.—"They are models of what addresses to children should be—thoroughly practical, eminently sensible, and full of spiritual suggestion."

The Rock.—"Each a little gem of its kind."

MEASURING SUNSHINE, and other Addresses to Children. By Rev. FRANK SMITH, M.A., B.Sc. Crown 8vo, 1s. 6d. net; by post, 1s. 9d.

Stirling Sentinel.—"They are just what talks to children ought to be—short, simple, earnest, practical, arresting the attention by admirable anecdotes and striking illustrations."

Free Church Chronicle.—"Bright, fresh, living talks."

Methodist Times.—"Remarkably well done."

TALKS TO CHILDREN ON BUNYAN'S HOLY WAR. By the Rev. CHAS. BROWN, Ferme Park (Hornsey). Crown 8vo, 2s. 6d.; also cheap edition, cloth, 1s. 6d. net. Postage 3d.

The Pilgrim's Progress has often been used by preachers as a subject for children's addresses; the Holy War much less often, and the publishers question if it ever has been so successfully treated as in this instance by Mr Brown.

Christian World.—"Many parents will be glad to have them to read to their children, and we can imagine that many ministers will be glad to take a hint from the book and speak on the same lines to the young people of their congregation."

LONDON

H. R. ALLENSON, Ltd., Racquet Court, Fleet Street, E.C.

SERMONS TO BOYS AND GIRLS. By JOHN EAMES, B.A. With complete Index. Crown 8vo, 1s. 6d. net.
Second Edition.

Methodist Times.—"Examples of what children's addresses ought to be—simple in language, but pointed in teaching."

Liverpool Post.—"The illustrations made use of are excellent and instructive, and always help to fix the point they illustrate on the memory."

TIN TACKS FOR TINY FOLKS, and other Outline Addresses for Teachers, Preachers, and Christian Workers amongst the Young. By Rev. C. EDWARDS, Author of "A Box of Nails." Crown 8vo, 2s. 6d.

Methodist Times.—"A mine of thought and illustration."

Local Preachers' Magazine.—"We could wish this handbook were placed in the hands of every preacher. Even those who shape their own outlines will find abundant helpful ideas, and just the kind to kindle thought."

THE MAKING OF A CHRISTIAN. A Guide to Personal Religion for Young People. By the Rev. C. ANDERSON SCOTT, M.A., Author of "Evangelical Doctrine—Bible Truth." Crown 8vo, 1s. 6d. Also cloth gilt, gilt edges, 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS.

WHAT IS RELIGION? A BOND.
WHAT IS SIN? THE BOND BROKEN.
THE HISTORY OF A SIN.
THE CRAVING FOR SALVATION.
SALVATION: WHAT IT IS, AND HOW IT COMES.
HOW THE BOND COMES TO BE RESTORED.

THE NEW CREATURE:
HIS BIRTH.
HIS NAME.
HIS SPEECH.
HIS FOOD.
HIS GYMNASICS.
HIS RELATIONS, HOME, AND COUNTRY.
HIS GROWTH AND DESTINY.

Expository Times.—"He writes for young people, and succeeds in imparting to them a complete system of Christian doctrine, apparently with the greatest ease on his part, and we are sure with the greatest delight on theirs."

"This is just the very book to put into the hands of our young people when they come to the parting of the ways, the deciding time, when they must definitely choose Christ or refuse Him. In the plainest language, but with great skill and freshness, it explains what Christianity is, and what the Christian life involves. We think it the best book of its kind we have seen, and it has the further advantage, that while addressed to the young, it is full of suggestive teaching for the mature Christian."

THE WARFARE OF GIRLHOOD. A Series of Bright Papers for Girls. By Mrs ROBERTSON LAWSON. Crown 8vo, art linen, 1s. 6d.

Christian World.—"The tone throughout is inspiring and practical."

LONDON

H. R. ALLENSON, Ltd., Racquet Court, Fleet Street, E.C.

PRAYERS AND MEDITATIONS OF DR SAMUEL JOHNSON. An entirely new and enlarged edition of these very beautiful and deeply devotional Prayers and Meditations. Demy 16mo, handsome cloth, 2s. 6d. net.

A SERIOUS CALL TO A DEVOUT AND HOLY LIFE. By WILLIAM LAW. With Introductory Letter by Dr ALEXANDER WHYTE. 188 pages, large clear type, demy 8vo, 6d. ; cloth boards, 1s. net.

Dr Whyte says in his letter to the publisher:—"It was a red-letter day in my life when I first opened William Law, and I feel his hand on my heart, and on my mind, and on my conscience, and on my whole inner man literally every day I live. How could I then but wish you God-speed in putting a cheap edition of Law's masterpiece before the English-reading world!"

GREAT SOULS AT PRAYER. Fourteen Centuries of Prayer, Praise, and Aspiration, from St Augustine to Christina Rossetti and R. L. Stevenson. Selected by M. W. TILESTON, Editor of "Daily Strength for Daily Needs." Sixth Edition.

One of the choicest of Gift Books, a delightful alternative to the more ordinary Daily Reading Books.

Pocket edition, 24mo, printed on Opaque India paper, paste grain, gilt edges, with silk marker, 2s. 6d. net.

Also demy 16mo, handsome purple cloth, bevelled boards, red edges, silk marker, 2s. 6d. net. Choice limp, dark green lambskin, silk marker, gilt edges, 4s. net.

"A very pleasing book."—*Academy*.

"Few books of devotion are so catholic, in the original sense of the word; and it is small wonder to see the compilation so successful."—*Scotsman*.

"There is a prayer for every day in the year. None are long, and most are beautifully simple and reverent. For daily reading or for suggesting suitable thoughts to those who have to offer public extempore prayer we can imagine nothing more helpful than this volume."

Methodist Times.

A DAILY MESSAGE FROM MANY MINDS.

Thoughts for the quiet hour from Fenelon, Jeremy Taylor, Wordsworth, Robertson, Phillips Brooks, Hawthorne, etc. 2s. 6d. net.

This choice devotional book is provided in two sizes, each uniform in style and price with "Great Souls at Prayer."

Also in white cloth, suitable for Wedding Gift, 2s. 6d. net.

"A dainty little book which will be treasured by many. The thoughts are excellently classified and indexed."—*Great Thoughts*.

"A particularly well-chosen day-book of beautiful verses and prose passages. The selection is unusually varied and unhackneyed, and ranges from cheery practical encouragement to high ideals."—*Bookman*.

LONDON: H. R. ALLENSON, LIMITED.

**FORTY-FOUR FRESH
GOOD STORIES**

Handsome Cloth, Crown 8vo, Gilt top, 2s. 6d. net

THE GOLDEN WINDOWS

FABLES FOR YOUNG AND OLD

By **LAURA E. RICHARDS**

Author of "Captain January," "The Silver Crown," &c.

CONTENTS OF THIS TRULY DELIGHTFUL BOOK:

The Golden Windows.
The Coming of the King.
The Tree in the City.
The House of Love.
The Great Feast.
The Walled Garden.
The Open Door.
A Misunderstanding.
From a Far Country.
A Matter of Importance.
The Wedding Guests.
The Shadow.
Good Advice.
The Strong Child.
The Apron String.

Two Ways.
The Desert.
The Scar.
The Hill.
The Day.
The Baby.
The Road.
Home.
The Stars.
The Cooky.
Anybody.
The Giftee.
The Staff.
To-Morrow.
The Door.

The Prominent Man.
For Remembrance.
The Blind Mother.
"Go" and "Come."
The Point of View.
A Fortune.
Child's Play.
The Windows.
The Wheatfield.
The Sailor Man.
Theology.
The Pig Brother.
About Angels.

HIGH PRAISE—WELL DESERVED

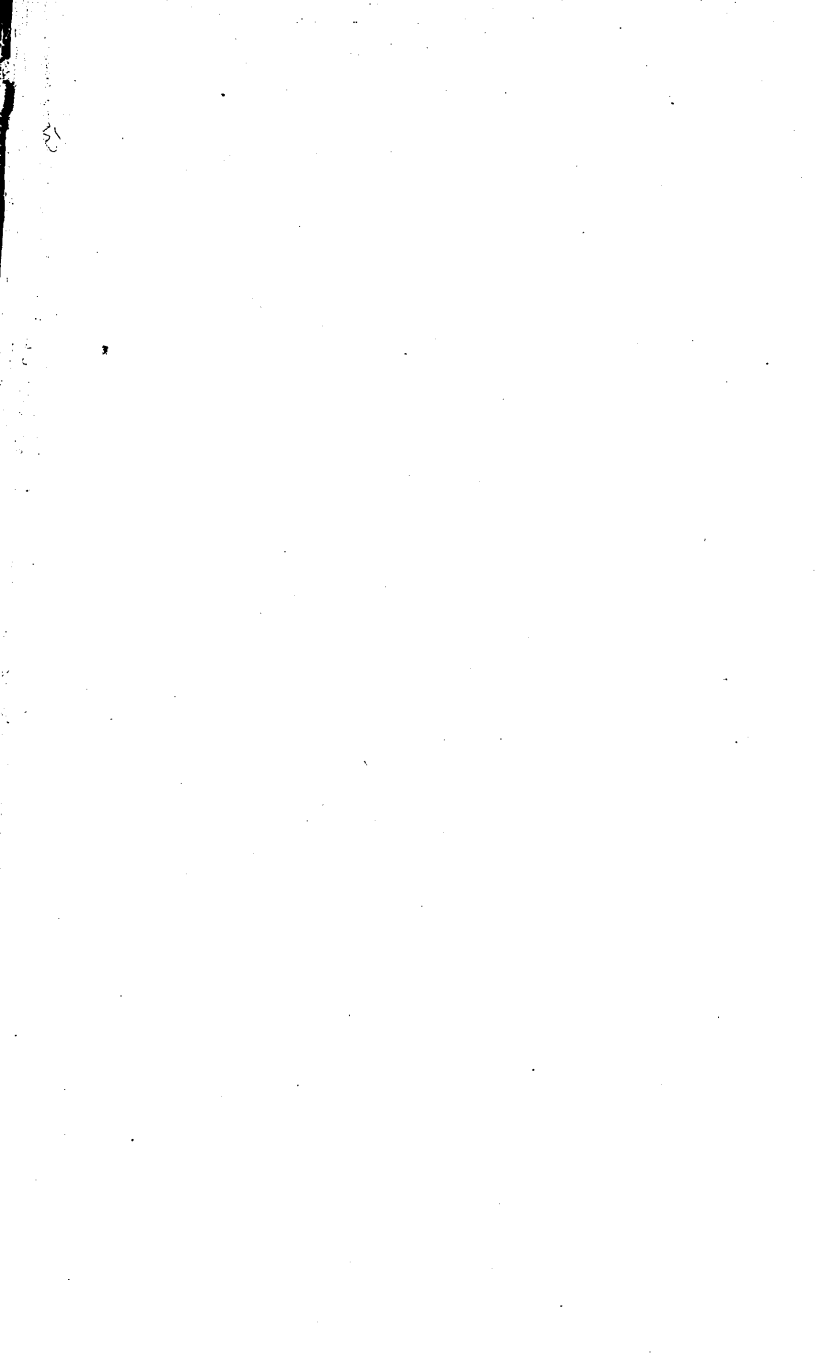
LILIAN WHITING writes:—"Of all the exquisite things in late literature 'The Golden Windows' must, perhaps, take leading place. It is a collection of brief allegorical tales, each stamped with the impress of uplifting, beautiful thought, presented in an original and striking manner, and with all the charm of style that characterises Mrs Richards."

Rev. BERNARD J. SNELL writes:—"I regard 'Golden Windows' as the most charming book that has come into my hands for many years. Every little casket of a story holds a gem of truth. How in the world is it so slow in getting known?"

The Bookman says:—"Parables were more ancient than arguments,' we have been told, and after reading Mrs Richards' tender, graceful little fables we are inclined to wonder why the older method gave place to the newer. In forty lovely lessons she enforces as many hidden truths, and writes so simply, yet so well, that the book will appeal to the old as well as to the young. The initial fable of 'The Golden Windows' tells of the boy who looked across to the wonderful shining windows on the opposite hill, until one day he journeyed to see them closely. When he reached them they were but ordinary glass, and looking back he saw that now his own home was the house with the golden windows. This is the skeleton of the fable, but Mrs Richards has filled it out with sympathy and a delicate fancy. The others are equally impressive, the one of 'The Wheatfield' being as touching as anything of the sort we have read. Indeed, we think there has been nothing so good as this volume since Mrs Gatty wrote her 'Parables from Nature.'"

LONDON

H. R. ALLENSON, Ltd., Racquet Court, Fleet Street, E.C.



BV 4315 .E2	Earnes Sermons... 316542
MAY 19 78 JUN 12 78 MAR 72 78 MAY 28 78	J. J. Ginn Fellow H. P. Lumsden May 28 78 2-27
	2-9871

2- 9871

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



56 504 088